

Blacklisting bosses better beware



Phil Chamberlain takes on the building firms' spying racket >>Page 6

SYRIZA & SOCIALIST STRATEGY

Alex Callinicos calls for challenging the state as our debate continues >>Pages 14&15



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Protesters in Newcastle taking on the Islamophobic Pegida group last month
PICTURE: PA



BEAT BACK THE RACISTS

- **Protesting detainees speak out** >>Page 7
- **Greeks take on Golden Dawn** >>Page 8
- **Busting immigration myths** >>Pages 10&11

RAGE AGAINST RACISM DEMONSTRATIONS

SATURDAY 21 MARCH

LONDON, GLASGOW, CARDIFF >>Details page 4



PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

FBU UNION

Essex fire strikers take control to defend conditions

EMERGENCY 999 control operators in Essex have upped their fight with Fire and Rescue bosses by walking out for nine days.

The workers began an eight-day strike on Tuesday of last week.

They are fighting shift changes and a new computer system.

>>Page 3

HILLSBOROUGH



Top Hillsborough cop admits 'far reaching deceit'

RELATIVES OF fans who died as a result of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster walked out of inquests into their deaths in disgust on Friday of last week.

Former chief superintendent David Duckenfield admitted that he "persisted in a far-reaching deceit" over his role.

>>Page 17

NATIONAL GALLERY

Strikers seek your support as they fight privatisation

WORKERS AT the National Gallery in central London began the latest stage of their battle against plans to privatise 400 out of 600 jobs last weekend.

Workers are organising to go on speaking tours during their strike.

>>Page 6



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'No beer for racists'

New beer mats from German football club Borussia Dortmund

'The Liberal Democrats are here to stay'

Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg in optimistic mode at the party's spring conference

'Boring fat man'

Suspended BBC presenter Jeremy Clarkson on himself

'They could just disintegrate'

Labour's Jon Cruddas on the plight of the main parties

'We are not the International Health Service'

Tory MP Andrew Bridgen gets on the anti-migrant bandwagon

'Slogan'

Tory grandee Ken Clarke on the Tories' economic policies

'Discretion and loyalty is paramount'

A job advert for a housekeeper to work for prince William and Kate Middleton

'Caring for home owners' clothing'

A key part of the role listed in the job advert

'A racket'

Former equalities boss Trevor Phillips on multiculturalism



Hospitalising an employee is a great way to relieve stress

APPARENTLY "personal issues" are to blame for Jeremy Clarkson's latest outburst. The BBC suspended the Top Gear presenter after a "fracas".

This allegedly involved Clarkson punching producer Oisin Tymon and calling him a "lazy Irish c***".

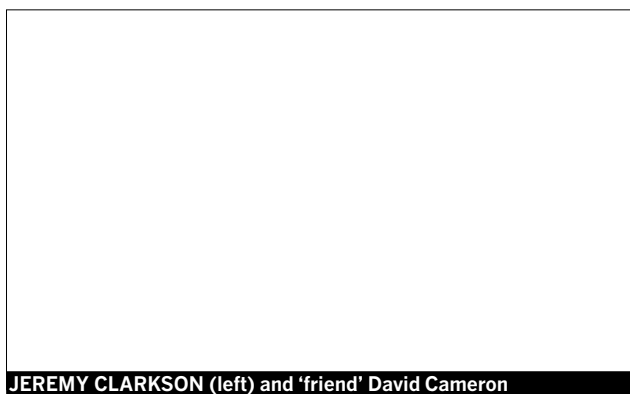
The attack reportedly hospitalised Tymon.

David Cameron quickly intervened to back Clarkson. "He's a constituent of mine, a friend of mine," said Cameron.

"He is such a huge talent and he amuses and entertains so many people. I hope this can be sorted out."

Clarkson broke up with his wife last year. A senior BBC executive has said this has led to "erratic behaviour".

It's true there was some racist behaviour last year.



JEREMY CLARKSON (left) and 'friend' David Cameron

For instance, Ofcom ruled that Clarkson deliberately used the "offensive racist term" slope when describing an Asian man.

And Clarkson was eventually forced to concede that he did use the word nigger.

"I did not use the N word," he initially said. Soon afterwards he said, "It did appear

that I'd actually used the word".

But it isn't "erratic" for Clarkson to be offensive.

In 2007 he advised, "You do not just avoid the Suzuki Wagon R. You avoid it like you would avoid unprotected sex with an Ethiopian transvestite."

In 2008 he thought it

would be a good "joke" to describe lorry drivers "murdering prostitutes".

In 2009 he complained that TV bosses liked hiring "black Muslim lesbians".

After the public sector pension strikes in November 2011 Clarkson said on national TV, "I'd have them all shot."

"I would take them outside and execute them in front of their families."

Clarkson's image is that of an ordinary bloke. In fact he's part of the elite.

He is mates with the Chipping Norton set, which includes Cameron and disgraced former News International editor Rebekah Brooks.

And he makes lots of cash for the BBC—which so far has been more important than making a stand against racism or sexism.

THE DAILY Mail was quick to jump on the idea that people can't talk about immigration for fear of being called racist.

The paper gave pages to the "explosive truths about race we can't talk about".

A box entitled "10 true things you can't say" went on to say them.

They included, "Irish people run the building trade" and "Romanians are far more likely to be pickpockets".



The Daily Mail says things it can't say

IT SEEMS Tony Blair could be looking for work after moves to end his role as Middle East peace envoy.

Blair has been busy bringing peace to the region since 2007. However, one senior diplomat said his retreat from the post is "long overdue". "He has no credibility in this part of the world," they added.

Squash your way to a thinner tomorrow!

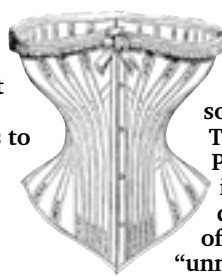
THINK THERE'S enough pressure on women to be thin? Well, there can always be more.

The corset diet is apparently "approved by doctors and dieticians".

It "helps" women lose weight by squashing them.

As its website explains, "The pleasant hugging sensation rewards the wearer with an improved figure."

Apparently the corsets can "reduce your waist immediately by 2 inches". This leads to "reduction of the internal volume of the stomach" which "can lead to loss of weight".



GREEN Party candidate Darren Hall spoke out against defence spending cuts last week.

In a Radio 4 interview Hall said, "It might surprise people to know that the Green Party has no plans to make further cuts to defence spending over and above what has been set out by the coalition government other than our well-understood position on Trident."

This led to some confusion. The Green Party website, in contrast, describes much of the military as "unnecessary".

If you lie, don't be over firm about it

TORY CHAIR Grant Shapps "over firmly denied" having a second job while an MP.

In a radio interview three weeks ago Shapps said, "I did not have a second job while being an MP, end of story."

Shapps was actually working as a web marketer under the pen name Michael Green.

David Cameron was said to have "full confidence" in Shapps.

OVER AT the Lib Dems Danny Alexander has

taken cash from a millionaire who defends tax avoidance.

Alexander said in 2013 he was "livid" at people who avoided tax. Yet he took £5,000 from non dom David Giampaolo last month.

Giampaolo is co-author of an article headlined, "It's not wrong to avoid tax."

Another £50,000 of Alexander's donations came from engineering boss Alan Savage. Savage told a court in 2011 that he had put a girlfriend on the payroll to pay less tax.



Shapps—confused?

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

No. 999

Police service
Professional harassers of working class people

●Police have stopped and searched 288 children under five over the past five years

●London's Metropolitan Police used stop and search on 182 under-fives

●Stop and search has been used on children as young as two years old



TOFF OF THE WEEK

Ann Gloag
Scotland's richest woman

●Multi-millionaire Gloag is evicting two pensioners from their home of 40 years

●She bought Beaufort Castle in 1994

●Jimmy and Lillie Bryan have lived on the estate for 40 years

●But Gloag wants to evict them so she can turn their home into a holiday letting

Electioneering is too much for busy Tories

GENERAL elections can take their toll on politicians.

Actually having to talk to voters can get in the way of second jobs and filling in expense claims.

Luckily, Tory London mayor Boris Johnson has found a way to ease the burden.

Last week he avoided a hustings meeting by sending a another Tory candidate instead.

A friend of the mayor explained, "Boris works very hard and has a packed diary. Some things have to give."

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Write to
Socialist Worker
PO Box 42184
London
SW8 2WD

Fire strikers in Essex take control to defend conditions

by ANNETTE MACKIN

EMERGENCY 999 control operators in Essex have upped their fight with Fire and Rescue bosses by walking out for nine days.

The workers began an eight-day strike on Tuesday of last week, but extended the action to hit back at attacks on their conditions.

They are fighting shift changes and a new computer system.

"The pressure is incredible," one striker told Socialist Worker. "I take calls from people who are trapped in house fires and I have to get a response in under 60 seconds."

"But I've been in situations where my screen is freezing and I have to work on a piece of paper."

"And management have the cheek to say the failures are down to 'user error'—but we are highly trained, with invaluable local knowledge."

Fire bosses have forced through shift changes which mean the emergency operators have to work longer, more unsocial hours.

Many have had to leave their jobs.

Changed

Shifts are being changed from nine-hour days and 15-hour nights with rest breaks to 12-hour days and 12-hour nights.

"It's had a real detrimental effect on people's lives," one striker told Socialist Worker.

"I don't see my children in the morning. And when I get home I'm so tired it's just dinner and then bed."

But workers are also furious at the new computer system which keeps going wrong.

Control staff are the first response to fire and rescue emergencies.

They process information and pass it on to fire crews. But they also often have to guide people who have phoned to safety in dangerous situations.

They report the new system



CONTROL STAFF on the picket line at Kelvedon Park last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

crashing at critical moments—which could put lives on the line.

The workers' FBU union has put forward alternative proposals to fire bosses—but they have refused to budge.

Control staff have previously struck alongside firefighters but the nine-day walkout is the first time they have taken action alone.

Workers say they have been "overwhelmed" by solidarity from across Britain.

On Friday of last week some 30 pickets and supporters gathered outside the Kelvedon Park fire and

rescue headquarters in Essex.

Essex FBU Control branch secretary Joy Bingham told Socialist Worker, "During talks with management you can feel quite isolated—but this shows us how strong we are."

Support

Another striker added, "We've had really good support from firefighters from all over."

"Management like to think that they are not on our side. We know we have to keep going, because whatever they do to us they'll go and do it to the firefighters next."

The strikers are mostly women and two delegates attended TUC women's conference last Thursday where they got a standing ovation. Delegates also raised over £500 for the strike.

And strikers are set to lobby politicians at Westminster at midday on Wednesday of this week.

FBU Control branch chair Emma Turnidge told Socialist Worker, "The response makes us even stronger—we have got the strength to do this."

Send messages of support on Twitter to @EssexFBU or by email at essexfbu@live.co.uk

IN BRIEF

Police 'divert' abuse money

SENIOR OFFICERS in South Yorkshire Police (SYP) diverted cash away from investigating child sexual exploitation according to a former detective.

Tony Brookes said thousands of pounds were diverted to tackling crimes such as robbery despite evidence of abuse in Sheffield.

SYP said it was not aware money had been diverted.

NHS backlog privatisation

HEALTH BOSSES have signed off on the biggest privatisation of NHS services to date to "deal" with a growing patient backlog.

Eleven private firms are set to pocket £780 million in the next four years. This will not solve the backlog caused by cuts and privatisation.

Tighten modern slavery law

A PROTEST at parliament on Tuesday of this week demanded that the new anti-slavery bill takes the plight of domestic workers into account.

Victims of slavery are often prosecuted or deported.

antislavery.org

Remembering Fukushima

ANTI-NUCLEAR activists around the world held protests last week to mark the fourth anniversary of the Fukushima disaster in Japan.

Three of the nuclear plant's reactors melted down, leaking radioactive material into the environment.

Socialist Worker

MAY DAY GREETINGS



To celebrate May Day, Socialist Worker prints solidarity messages from readers, trade union branches, SWSS groups and campaigns. The deadline to get your message into Socialist Worker is **Wednesday 15 April**

mayday@socialistworker.co.uk

Police corruption claim over abuse

THE METROPOLITAN Police will investigate itself over allegations of corruption, including that it covered up child abuse involving MPs and police officers.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission will oversee the inquiry into what it called allegations of "high level corruption".

The allegations relate to evidence dating from between 1970 and 2005. It includes claims that an abuse victim's statement was

altered to remove the name of a senior politician.

There is also an allegation of conspiracy within the Metropolitan Police to stop the prosecution of a politician suspected of abuse.

A former officer has claimed that police were told to scrap an undercover investigation that obtained evidence of abuse by late MP Cyril Smith.



Cyril Smith

Officers were allegedly told to hand over all their

evidence and warned to keep quiet or face prosecution under the Official Secrets Act.

Cops allegedly failed to prosecute a senior Metropolitan Police officer who joined "members of the establishment including judges" in sexually abusing children.

One senior officer was said to have closed down an investigation, saying the order came from "up high".

An investigation into suspected abuse at the Dolphin Square flats in Pimlico, south London, was allegedly dropped after officers got "too near prominent people".

Sadie Robinson

IN THIS WEEK

1960

The Sharpeville Massacre

Apartheid police in South Africa opened fire on a black protest in the Sharpeville township near Johannesburg on 21 March 1960, killing 69.

The vicious repression that followed led the ANC resistance movement to abandon non-violence.



Anti-racists organise to take to the streets

We need to build a strong anti-racist movement and Saturday's protests are where we start, writes **Ken Olende**

TENS OF thousands of young black and Asian people have been consigned to the unemployment scrapheap, new figures have shown.

An analysis of official figures has found that 41,000 black and Asian people aged between 18 and 24 have been out of work for more than a year.

That is a fifth of all the long term unemployed in this age group—and the number has risen by 50 per cent since the Tories came to office.

These latest figures are just one more reason why it is important to take to the streets of London, Glasgow and Cardiff to rage against racism this Saturday.

As the statistics were published, activists used a weekend of action to build for the Stand Up to Racism and Fascism demonstrations.

Campaigners leafleted Chelsea football ground last Saturday.

Blocking

A video emerged last month showing Chelsea fans blocking a black man from getting on a train in Paris. They chanted, "We're racist and that's the way we like it."

But on Saturday activists were joined by Chelsea fans who held up "No racism at the Bridge. That's the way we like it" posters.

BACK STORY

Demonstrations will be taking place around the world on Saturday against racism and fascism

●The call for protests came from Greece, where anti-fascists will march in Athens against the Nazi Golden Dawn party

●Marches are also set to take place in France and Germany

●Some 7,000 trade unionists and migrants marched through central London last year to say no to racism and scapegoating

Others leafleted Friday prayers at mosques, with many going to the east London mosque in Whitechapel.

Anti-racist campaigners have also been taking to the streets to argue against the scapegoating of migrants.

The Tories have made "controlling" immigration a top priority. They imply that this control would make ordinary people better off—but that is a lie.

It does not benefit working people.

Disgracefully the Labour leadership have chased anti-immigrant policies and have made "controlling



MARCHING ON the Stand Up to Racism and Fascism demonstration last March

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

immigration" one of the party's election pledges.

Racists often complain that no one is allowed to discuss race in Britain. But studies since have shown that immigrant communities do not "self segregate".

Phillips has kept up his policy of blaming the oppressed in his latest claims that it is impossible to talk about race.

In the Daily Mail newspaper he outlined the so-called "Ten True Things You Can't Say" about race. One of these, according to Phillips, is that "white (and poor) is the new black".

He claimed in 2005 that Muslims were responsible for Islamophobia

because they isolated themselves. He said Britain was "sleepwalking to segregation".

But studies since have shown that immigrant communities do not "self segregate".

Phillips has kept up his policy of blaming the oppressed in his latest claims that it is impossible to talk about race.

In the Daily Mail newspaper he outlined the so-called "Ten True Things You Can't Say" about race.

One of these, according to Phillips, is that "white (and poor) is the new black".

He goes as far as to say that

challenging this kind of racism has given rise to "angry, nativist political movements" like Ukip.

But studies since have shown that immigrant communities do not "self segregate".

The racist party benefitted from the mainstream parties' scapegoating of immigrants.

To beat them we need a strong anti-racist movement. Get your union banner, workmates and join the marches this Saturday.

On other pages...
Demolishing eight lies about migrants >> Pages 10&11

'We have to fight in unity'

OVER 250 students packed into a lecture theatre at the University of Sussex on Tuesday of last week to mobilise for Saturday's protests.

Carole Duggan, aunt of Mark Duggan who was killed by police, encouraged people to join the protests saying, "When we have numbers, we have strength."

"We have to come



Students at Sussex Uni

together and fight in unity." Maz Saleem, whose

father was murdered by a racist, outlined how important the demo was in fighting Islamophobia.

Student groups including the Islamic society, the Afro-Caribbean society, and Socialist Worker Student Society organised the meeting. Afterwards over 50 students bought coach tickets. Lewis Nielsen

Right whip up Islamophobia over Isis

DETAINEE RIGHTS campaign group Cage and its director Moazzam Begg have been the target of more Islamophobic smears.

The Mail on Sunday newspaper claimed it had evidence that Moazzam visited the camp where Londoner Mohammed Emwazi allegedly trained as an Isis fighter.

It quotes unnamed "official sources" speculating over the identities of men wearing balaclavas in a photo from around 2012.

The paper had already attacked Cage and Moazzam for saying that it was Western imperialism and state terror that helped make Emwazi, known as "Jihadi John", into an Isis fighter.

Mohammed Tasnime Akunjee, the solicitor for the students from east London who have allegedly travelled to Syria to join Isis, has also come under attack.

Andrew Gilligan in The Telegraph newspaper said that he is an "extremist" with links to "terror apologists" Cage. This was after the solicitor criticised police handling of the case.

The sisters of the students also now face "radicalisation" tests as the tide of Islamophobia grows higher around such cases.

This week three teenagers from Britain were arrested in Turkey on "suspicion of preparing terrorist attacks". They were bailed pending further inquiries.

Annette Mackin

Farage plans misery for migrants if Ukip elected

UKIP WOULD limit migrant children's access to state education, according to party leader Nigel Farage.

Farage said he thought migrants should pay for private education for their children until they had lived in Britain for five years.

It's the latest nasty move from the racist party to try and paint migrants as a drain on services. He claimed that this wasn't a Ukip manifesto pledge.

Yet Ukip's website states, "Immigrants must financially support themselves and their dependants for five years."

This means private health insurance (except emergency medical care), education and housing."

Farage has also said Ukip would scrap "much of" the laws against racial discrimination at work.

Some of Ukip's leadership are more forthright

with their racism. David Coburn, leader of Ukip in Scotland, last week compared Britain's only Muslim minister to a convicted terrorist.

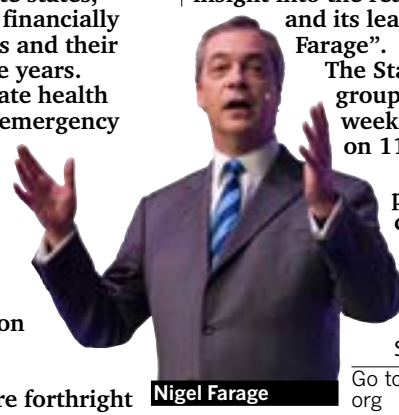
Coburn referred to "Humza Yousaf, or as I call him, Abu Hamza."

Anti-racists are organising against Ukip. In Thanet, where Farage hopes to be elected MP in May, filmmaker Christine Tongue has made a documentary about Ukip. She said it gives "a useful insight into the reality of Ukip and its leader Nigel Farage".

The Stand Up to Ukip group has called a weekend of action on 11 and 12 April.

Activists also plan to target commuters at London stations on 26 March and 16 April. Sadie Robinson

Go to standuptoukip.org



Nigel Farage

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

FIGHTING IN UNITY MAKES OUR CLASS STRONGER

THE HEAD of the National Audit Office attacked the scale of the Tories' cuts as Tory chancellor George Osborne prepared the government's last budget.

Sir Amyas Morse is not a likely ally to millions of working class people who've been hit hard during last five years of Tory austerity.

His condemnation is a sign of just how severe the situation is.

In an interview about the cuts in the Financial Times newspaper, he warned, "If you are going to do radical surgery it would be nice if you knew where the heart was."

"You're slightly more likely not to stick a knife in it by mistake."

Osborne is likely to claim the Tories have successfully turned the economy around, so they can slightly water down cuts planned if they win the election.

These were set to be even deeper than cuts made so far.

Osborne and David Cameron aren't concerned about the people hit by their cuts—they just want to make Britain profitable for the boss class.

But when workers look to Labour to offer an alternative,

many despair. Even long time supporters wonder if they can vote for a party that's committed to Tory austerity and has helped feed a backlash against migrants.

That's why the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) is standing parliamentary and council candidates as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.

It's a modest start, but there is a glaring need for a left alternative to Labour and we need to fight to build one.

Whatever the result of May's general election, battles over welfare cuts, attacks on pay and pensions and jobs will go on.

The racist Ukip party has gained support after mainstream

parties made it more respectable to attack migrants.

If Ukip wins more seats in parliament then it will help drag politics even further to the right.

But we can build resistance.

The SWP believes that what every activist does in their workplace, college or local area can make a difference.

That's why we want to organise everyone who wants to fight racist scapegoating.

The rich use racism to discourage workers from blaming those really responsible for austerity.

Every week politicians and the media scapegoat migrants or demonise Muslims.

We say, don't let the ruling class divide us. Working class people have a common interest—whatever their skin colour, wherever they were born and whatever their religion or none.

We need union leaders to mobilise a fightback and challenge the government's attacks.

We know that in every struggle our class is stronger when we unite and fight.

If you agree, join the SWP today.

swp.org.uk/forms/join-swp

**We say, don't let
the ruling class
divide us. Workers
have a common
interest**

DEALS WON'T STOP CUTS

THE OUTCOME of May's general election is hard to predict.

Yet the deteriorating support for the established parties is clear.

As people reject a rotten

Westminster political system—and the liars and thieves who run it—political alternatives to the Tories and Labour gain ground.

The astonishing rise in support for the Scottish National Party (SNP) reflects this, along with a desire to punish Scottish Labour for its pact with the Tories in the

independence referendum.

Facing the prospect of dozens of SNP MPs, right wingers have rallied against "rampaging Scot Nats" coming to "storm" Westminster and hold Britain to ransom.

The fact that the establishment has spent much of the past week attacking the SNP and the Greens shows how worried it is.

Labour leader Ed Miliband partly succumbed to pressure and announced, "There will be no SNP ministers in any government I lead."

This suits Labour and the SNP.

Miliband can deflect some of the right's flak. And endangered Scottish Labour MPs can continue with their desperate line of "Vote SNP get a Tory government".

The SNP also wants to avoid a direct association with Labour's austerity when it has its own cuts to disguise in Scotland.

The one certainty after 8 May is that we will need to get organised and keep up the fight against austerity—whatever gets into office.

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RAGE AGAINST RACISM

Demonstrate on
Sat 21 March

London
Assemble 12 noon
Portland Place

Glasgow
Assemble 11am
George Square

Cardiff
Assemble 11:30am
Clare Gardens,
Riverside

ANALYSIS

PHIL CHAMBERLAIN



Workers tell the real story of blacklisting

THE PICTURES started appearing on social media as soon as people got hold of copies. They showed a book on building sites, stashed among tool bags and in the pub.

Blacklisted, which tells the story of the construction industry's secret operation to deny work to union activists, has taken six years to get published.

As former blacklisted worker Dave Smith and I worked on it during that time a couple of things remained constant.

One was that it would be a campaigning book.

It was not a story about victims, but how people resisted efforts to deny them work simply because of their union activities.

The pictures that flooded Twitter are a testament to that ongoing resistance.

The other objective was that it would tell of the blacklists' impact in the words of those affected. We spent many hours and travelled hundreds of miles to get those stories.

Inevitably only a proportion of the many words we recorded have made it into the book.

Nevertheless, we tried to tear the history of the blacklist away from those who maintained, justified or just plain ignored the scandal.

We handed it to those who were targeted and who challenged it.

What the book also makes clear is that a coalition of people, from often different perspectives, has coalesced around this issue.

In 2008 I wrote an article for The Guardian newspaper that suggested blacklisting in the construction industry remained a problem despite official denials.

That story was picked up by David Clancy, an investigator for the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). His inquiries led to a raid on an anonymous building in the West Midlands.

Troublemakers

It was home to The Consulting Association, which was funded by the biggest names in the construction industry to keep tabs on people they considered troublemakers.

Some 3,200 files were seized by the ICO.

An analysis of them showed that raising health and safety concerns or taking part in legitimate activity was enough to get you on the blacklist.

The effect was loss of work, marriages under strain, people forced to change careers or emigrate and in some cases suicide.

Meanwhile, on average, one person a week dies on a building site.

It cost each company £2.20 to check a name and so from the association's financial records it was possible to get an idea of the scale of the operation.

In just one three-month period Sir Robert McAlpine checked more than 5,800 names.

That period coincided with the firm's work on the Olympic project.

This was blacklisting on an industrial scale.

The book doesn't treat The Consulting Association as an aberration but places it within a long tradition of anti-union activity.

It has direct links back to the 1972 building workers' strike, forward to the rise in environmental activism in the 1990s and international examples.

Challenging the blacklist has brought those different groups affected together.

There had long been rumours of state involvement.

The Economic League, set up in 1919, had acknowledged links with the secret state. It nurtured the Consulting Association.

The book has first hand evidence from those at the heart of the conspiracy to prove those links remained strong.

As yet few of those responsible have suffered any penalty.

Blacklisted lays out the evidence and names those who should be called to account. Only a full public inquiry will write the final chapter.

Blacklisted—the secret war between big business and union activists by Dave Smith and Phil Chamberlain. Available from Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop, priced £9.99. Go to bookmarksbookshop.co.uk or phone 020 7637 1848

Strikers seek your support as they fight privatisation plans

National Gallery workers have begun a speaking tour to build their strike, reports **Annette Mackin**

WORKERS AT the National Gallery in central London began the latest stage of their battle against plans to privatise 400 out of 600 jobs last weekend.

They struck on Saturday and Sunday, and are set to walk out again for five days from Tuesday of next week.

The Sainsbury wing of the gallery has already been handed over to private security firm CIS. Gallery bosses don't pay workers the London Living Wage, but the CIS staff are on £10 an hour during the strike.

One striker said, "It's a slap in the face. I saw visitors who don't have English as their first language asking for help, but the CIS security staff just shrugged. Many of us can speak more than one language and could've helped. It's very frustrating."

"But at the same time the CIS staff are not getting the benefits of being in a union."

Donation

The strike has attracted support from across Britain. Last week strikers received their largest donation yet—£1,000 from the Communication Workers Union.

Students and workers at the Courtauld Institute of Art in central London are the latest to pledge their support.

Support is also growing for suspended PCS union rep Candy Udwin. Bosses hoped that taking action against her before the first walkout in January would undermine



SOLIDARITY

You can help the strike

- Invite strikers to speak at a meeting. Contact noprivatisationatNG@gmail.com
- Donate to the strike fund: Sort code 086001, Account no. 20169002, or cheques to Culture Sector Hardship Fund, c/o PCS North West Region, Jack Jones House, 1 Islington, Liverpool L3 8EG
- Sign and share petition at you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/no-privatisation-at-national-gallery
- Download a #ReinstateCandy poster from bit.ly/reinstatecandy
- See "No Privatisation at the National Gallery" on Facebook

VICTIMISED REP Candy Udwin (front centre) on the picket line last weekend

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

the strike. But Candy has joined strikers on the picket lines. She also spoke about the effects privatisation will have at the TUC union federation's south east region's culture conference last Saturday.

The vindictive move by bosses has only made workers more determined to resist.

"There is a lot of solidarity among us in the union," said a striker, "and a lot of public support too, which encourages us."

Workers are organising to go on speaking tours during their strike. They urge trade unionists and campaigners to book them in to speak.

They have called a national day of action on Thursday of next week.

Gallery bosses infuriated workers by informing PCS that they will stop taking part in talks at government conciliation service Acas.

"We need more strikes if this is not resolved," said a worker. "It is a constant fight. Why won't they just let us get on with our jobs?"

Workers at Dulwich Picture Gallery in south London showed it's possible to beat the bosses this week.

A planned seven-day strike forced Gallery bosses to withdraw plans to make 19 out of 36 gallery assistants redundant.

Got a story?

Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Cuts fall on poor while rich see resources rise

by **RAYMIE KIERNAN**

THE POOR have suffered disproportionately higher levels of cuts in the last three years.

That's according to a new report on council budgets from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

In England the most deprived local authorities have seen cuts of £220 per head, compared to £40 per head in the least deprived.

In Scotland the picture is not as stark, but the trend is the same.

Even in social care

spending, which is "relatively protected", poorer areas have suffered a real terms cut of £65 per head. Wealthier areas saw a £28 a head increase.

The report highlighted the impact on local government workers struggling with workloads.

It said, "The level of stress this entails does not appear sustainable in the longer term. In many areas staff report feeling overwhelmed by the scale and nature of the problems they are dealing with."

Poor areas, such as Margate in Kent, have had higher council cuts

jrf.org.uk

Desperate protest in jail turned detention centre

by KEN OLENDE

DETAINEES WHO witnessed a protest at the Verne immigration detention centre in Dorset told Socialist Worker about the anger growing inside Britain's brutal detention system.

They say an Iraqi detainee climbed on the porch roof of the education block on Friday 6 March. They say he then put a noose made from a bed sheet round his neck and jumped.

The sheet broke and he was not injured, but up to 150 detainees protested after the incident.

Haile, who is detained in the Verne, told Socialist Worker, "The guy who went on the roof has been here nearly a year. He did it just to get someone to tell him what's going on with his case."

"When staff rushed over after he jumped there were maybe ten people around them, but not close or threatening. But the officers said we were all going to be locked up in our cells."

"That brought out the anger. They're not supposed to lock us in at that time."

The incident happened hours before 8pm, when cells are usually locked for the night. Haile said some detainees threw things at the guards.

Another detainee said, "Some feel suicidal. People in here are getting frustrated."

"And it's getting worse. Over the past three or four months the Verne has just filled up. People just seem to be dumped here."

Dumped

The Verne closed as a prison in November 2013 and re-opened as an immigration detention centre three months later.

Haile said, "This is the same as prison, except people don't know how long they're here for."

"We still have the same officers and routine. They still give us the same IEP." IEP is the privileges system that is used in prisons.

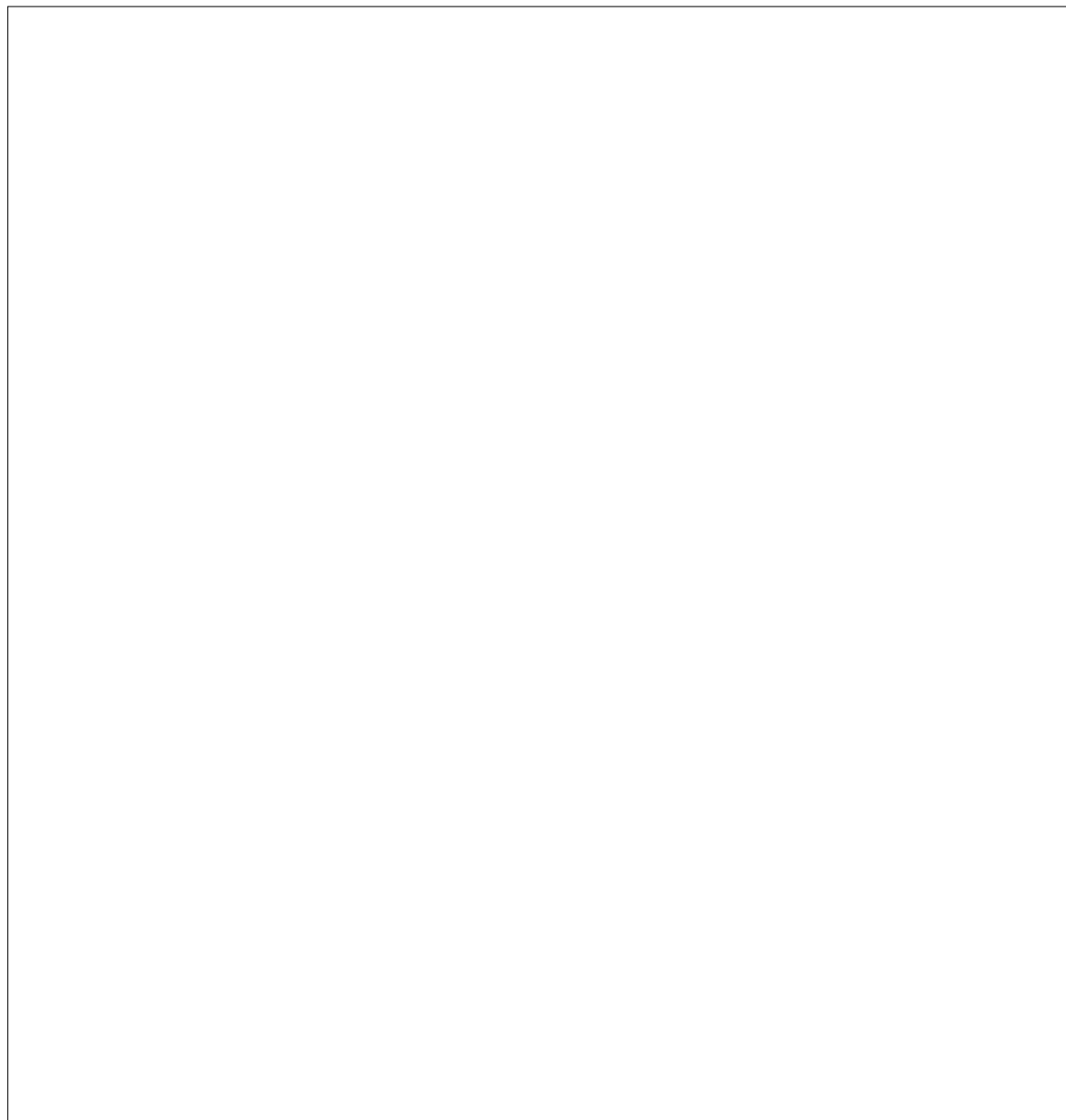
Haile is threatened with deportation because he has spent time in prison. He was born in Eritrea in east Africa.

"I left as a kid," he said. "I don't know anyone there. My mum died when I was a baby. Why didn't they deport me as a kid? I've got three kids in this country and I don't know when I'll see them."

"I was arrested for burglary. I did it. I served six months. But I've been held ever since. I've done three or four times my sentence now."

Another detainee held for similar reasons said, "I don't really understand this immigration stuff. I thought I was British. I have lived here most of my life."

"All my family are here. I've got



THE VERNE immigration detention centre in Dorset was a prison until November 2013

three kids too. But are they saying I'm worse than another person—a white person who grew up here like me and served time?"

John Hancock, POA prison officers union executive member covering the area, has seen body camera evidence of what happened.

"Officers went to help him," he told Socialist Worker. "Worried that they were going to be assaulted they dragged him into the education department."

"There were about 150 detainees around, but only 12 staff. Staffing levels at The Verne are not adequate."

A Home Office spokesperson said, "We are aware of an incident. No detainees or staff were injured, but the emergency services were called as a precaution."



What's your story?

Been in detention? Contact us at reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Detainees on hunger strike

PROTESTS continue at immigration detention centres around Britain after a hunger strike at Harmondsworth this month. Detainees say their cells have been searched for camera phones to stop them sending images out.

Up to 70 people joined a hunger strike at Dungavel detention centre in Scotland.

Protesters gathered outside last Sunday. One detainee posted on the Detained Voices website, "We can't really see them because of the walls but it is good to hear them."

The hunger strikers' demands include "a time limit on how long you can detain people". They also complain,

"About 80 percent are from London and so we are away from families and friends."

Another detainee in Harmondsworth posted, "Lots of detainees have mental health problems, they are doing self harms—we are not criminals. They are putting everyone on fast track system which means we will get refused within a few days."

Other protests took place at Colnbrook, which is next to Harmondsworth by Heathrow, Dover, Brook House by Gatwick airport, Pennine House near Manchester, Campsfield House near Oxford and Morton Hall in Lincolnshire.

Go to detainedvoices.wordpress.com

Meet a TUSC candidate

Lynne Chamberlain Greenwich and Woolwich

THE TRADE Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is standing over 100 candidates in May's general election.

Greenwich College lecturer Lynne Chamberlain has hit the ground running since she was selected for Greenwich and Woolwich in south east London.

She said, "I got a great reception at the bus station, where they know me well from the trades council. And Socialist Worker's anti-austerity poster has had a great reception on our street stalls."

"Three enthusiastic students said they wanted to join the campaign because they were so angry at the cut to Education Maintenance Allowance."

"When you talk to workers, whether they're lecturers or cleaners, firefighters or shop assistants, it's the same issues that unite—lack of a pay rise, bullying bosses and working conditions."

Around 20 people have already joined Lynne's election team—from neighbours who took on greedy developers to a Sikh supporter who plans to leaflet his temple.

Pat Coker, whose son Paul died in police custody, plans to get involved.

Lynne's colleagues support her—and are "fired up and angry" over education cuts.

They've just voted by 94 percent to strike against attacks on their contracts, similar to those that led to 42 days of strikes at Lambeth College.

Lynne has been featured in the local press and invited to a hustings. She said, "You can see all the people signing a petition for Jeremy Clarkson and despair. But then you see the other petition that thousands are signing, against the cuts to adult education—which I'll be using the election to highlight."

"The anger is building up and there's a real hostility to the government. We can use that to make a big splash."



Lynne Chamberlain



IN BRIEF

Hypocrisy over cop shootings

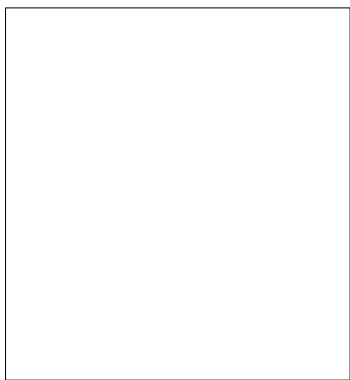
US PRESIDENT Barack Obama rushed to condemn the shooting of two police officers in Ferguson, Missouri, last week.

The cops were shot and wounded while policing a demonstration against police brutality and racism.

Obama said whoever fired the shots “are criminals, they need to be arrested”.

Black teenager Michael Brown was shot and killed by cop Darren Wilson in Ferguson last August. A grand jury found that no crime had been committed.

Jeffrey Williams has been arrested. He admitted participating in the gunfire last week, but says he was far from the protest and was aiming at other individuals.



US president Barack Obama

US ramps up Ukraine tensions

THE US will send another £50 million of “non lethal” military aid to bolster the Ukrainian government’s war with Russian separatists in the country’s south east.

US Congress has been pressuring president Barack Obama to send “lethal aid”.

The batch includes hand launched Raven drones, 30 heavily armoured Humvee cars and 200 regular ones.

Obama sanctions Venezuela

THE US last week imposed sanctions on seven top Venezuelan officials in response to alleged human rights violations in Venezuela.

These include the arrest of opposition politicians accused of plotting a coup, and the policing of anti-government demonstrations.

These violent hard right “protests” led to over 40 deaths.

President Nicolas Maduro responded by promoting one of the seven officials, General Gustavo Gonzalez, to interior minister. Parliament also granted him the power to rule by decree until 31 December.

Growing confidence in Greece to take on Nazis

by PETROS CONSTANTINOU
in Athens, Greece

THE CALL for international protests against racism and fascism this Saturday first came from Greece. And the demonstrations here look set to be massive.

There is a good response from the left, the trade unions, even municipal councils.

There are a lot of activities in migrant communities—in the mosques, the shops, the streets—and immigrants are going into universities to speak to students. They feel more powerful, and they will mobilise in mass.

Protests are planned in the capital Athens, Thessalonica in the north and Chania in Crete. A protest in Patras in the west will see the immigrant strawberry farm workers from Manolada, who were shot at by their bosses in 2013, return to the streets.

The demonstration is a big preparation for the long-awaited trial of the fascist party Golden Dawn, finally set to begin on 20 April.

Violent

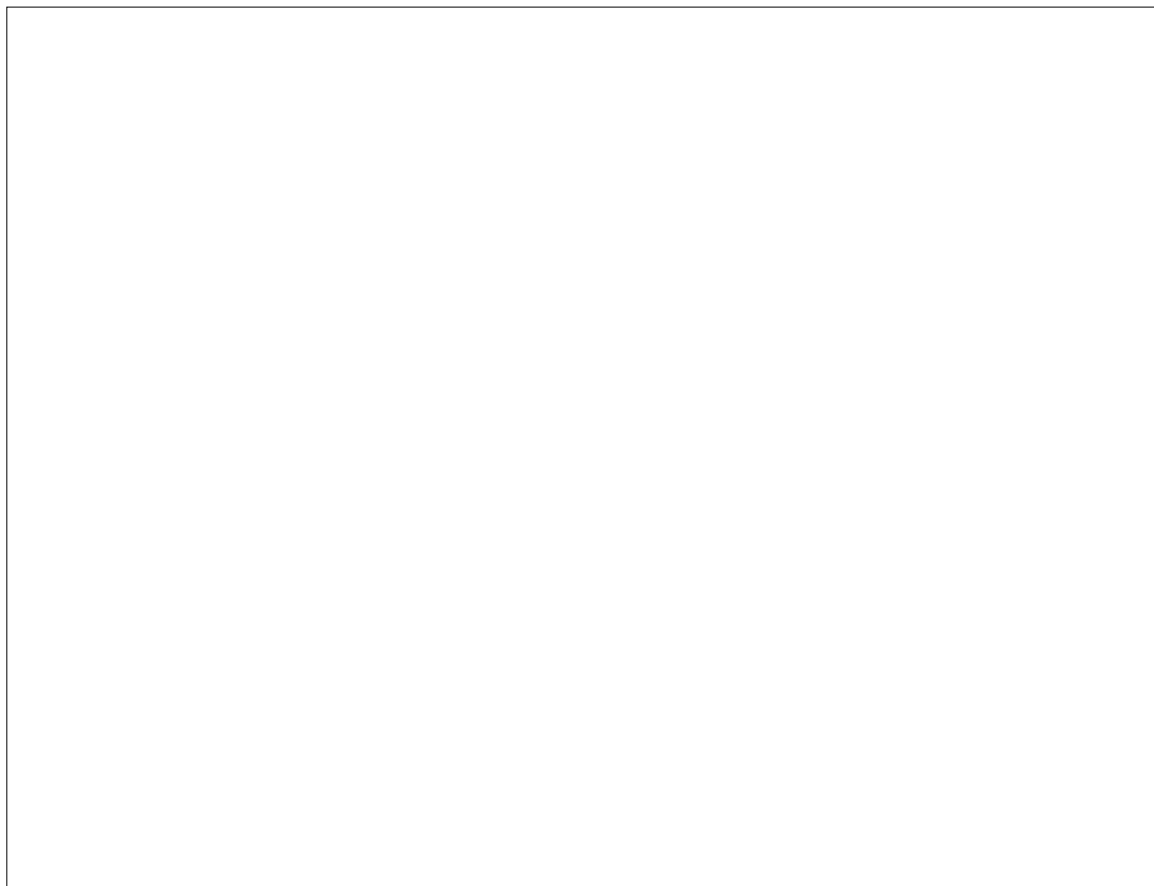
The fascists have led violent attacks, and protesters demand they are put in prison.

But Golden Dawn is trying to return to the political scene by exploiting the frustration at compromises the government has made with the European Union. It wants to become the opposition that says immigrants are to blame.

Newly elected left party Syriza formed a government in January including ministers from a party to its right.

It has made steps in a good direction—and some in the wrong direction.

Syriza promised to shut down the



THE ARREST of Golden Dawn leader Nikolaos Michaloliakos, who faces trial with other party members

camps where thousands of migrants are detained in horrific conditions.

But a racist campaign by the right wing, claiming that closing the camps will increase crime, has put them under pressure.

Now the plan is to let people out slowly. Two months into the new government only 500 detainees have been released—barely 10 per cent of the total.

And minister of public order Giannis Panousis says they will restart police sweeps for illegal

immigrants in the centre of Athens. Those who don’t have papers will be arrested—and no migrants have been given papers for years.

This new cycle of racist sweeps has given Golden Dawn an opening to call a meeting against immigration.

The speaker of parliament Zoi Konstantopoulou, a member of Syriza, has said it’s essential to have Golden Dawn MPs in parliament for it to vote. This is a terrible declaration, and a reminder that labelling

them a criminal organisation is an open fight.

Many people in Syriza are angry at this declaration. And in every council and trade union Syriza members have been voting to back Saturday’s demonstration.

There is a self-confidence that everyone feels. It says we can stop the racists and fascists. And that means there must be no steps back.

Petros is coordinator of Keerfa (United Movement Against Racism and the Fascist Threat)

NORTHERN IRELAND

Strike hits back at deal

TENS OF thousands of public sector workers across Northern Ireland took part in the biggest one-day strike there in years on Friday of last week.

Members of the Unison, Unite, Nipsa, INTO and GMB unions were protesting against a Stormont House deal which would mean harsh welfare cuts and the loss of 20,000 jobs.

Civil service workers joined with health and education workers.

Teachers joined the strike alongside canteen and other support staff, and no buses or trains ran on the day.

Workers gathered for rallies in

towns across Northern Ireland and passing shoppers applauded as thousands marched in Belfast’s city centre.

NHS paramedics were angry when the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service declared a “major incident” just before they were due to strike.

This makes it compulsory to go to work.

Patricia McKeown from the Unison union said the move was “strike-breaking and intimidation”.

The unions vow to call more strikes before May’s general election if the deal is not withdrawn.

VANUATU

Island hit by ‘monster’ storm

CYCLONE PAM devastated the Pacific island nation of Vanuatu last week.

The death toll was yet to be confirmed as Socialist Worker went to press. Aid agencies believe 100,000 people were made homeless in a population of just 267,000. Poverty and poor housing and infrastructure made the disaster worse.

Vanuatu’s president, Baldwin Lonsdale, blamed climate change for the “monster” storm.

Rising sea levels, caused in part by climate change, have already forced villages in Vanuatu to relocate away from the advancing coast.



Cyclone has left thousands homeless

What's real medicine?

IT'S NOT often that I defend a Tory. But attacking David Tredinnick MP (Trouble-maker, 7 March) for his beliefs in astrology and homeopathy sides with "real medicine".

Do you mean the corrupt drug companies who bribe for market share to exploit sickness for profit? Bear in mind Thalidomide, Prozac and other disasters of "real medicine".

Believing in certain herbs and the gravitational effect of the moon can have a positive placebo effect—where the belief itself helps make you better.

This is not something to attack. If it works, it works.

Hugh Parsons
Swansea

Are Greens right for me?

I'M INTRIGUED by the Green Party's call to end austerity and to support other parties after the election without entering a coalition (Socialist Worker, 14 March).

I've looked at many alternatives to the Labour Party, such as TUSC and others, but the Greens remain the largest of them.

I support their calls for free education, and some other policies, but fear they could move to the right after the general election.

What I need from a political party is action. A cast iron guarantee that education and the NHS will be free, and children and vulnerable people will be protected and encouraged. Are the Greens right for me?

Graham Manley
Liverpool

No illusions in SNP—but back it over Labour

HAS SOCIALIST Worker lost the plot in Scotland?

Ahead of an historic election that might see the Labour Party annihilated and the British state put at risk you launch the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) project in Glasgow, a Yes city.

You've decided the Glasgow working class can't see the limits of the Scottish National Party's (SNP) radicalism—get real. Yes supporters want to



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Merger of Manchester care will only bring together cuts

READERS MAY have seen the latest plans in Manchester to add £6 billion of NHS services to social services.

This was cobbled together by Tory chancellor George Osborne and Labour council leaders.

It would transfer the spending of NHS cash to ten local councils from April 2016.

This has been concocted as part of a plan to create a Greater Manchester Authority with a new mayor.

This is not democracy—in 2012 we voted against having a mayor in Manchester.

No wonder so many people are cynical about voting.

More importantly, merging health and social care solves

none of the major problems facing the NHS or social care services.

All the councils in Manchester have implemented 40 percent cuts over the last five years.

The health service has suffered cuts of 20 percent.

And both services have seen increased privatisation.

That is the opposite of cooperation.

Sharing commissioning for the services will solve nothing.

Mental health has been shared between local government and health for many years.

Yet there are still many days when you can't get a mental health bed anywhere in England. This is yet another untested

reorganisation, written on the back of an envelope.

And it also accepts austerity, cuts and a role for the market in health and social care.

Putting two leaking buckets together just creates a bigger leaking bucket.

That's why, more than ever, we need to fight privatisation and cuts in our services.

We need to build fights that link the struggles of health workers, social service workers, users, carers and campaigners—like ours in Bolton which stopped privatisation.

That's the sort of merger I'm interested in.

Karen Reissmann
Manchester

Build the alternative to Labour and SNP

TRADE UNIONISTS and anti-austerity activists joined a STUC and Unison-backed lobby of Labour's conference in Scotland last week.

A tiny band of anti-Labour protesters held their own demo chanting "Red Tories Out".

Instead we attempted to engage with those inside with arguments about defending the NHS and opposing racism and fascism on 21 March.

Regrettably, parts of the left were absent.

Lobbying Labour's conference

Labour is disintegrating in Scotland and people are open to new political formations. This is not the time to leave the field to

the Scottish National Party and wait for the Scottish elections in 2016.

The ground is shifting fast. One Labour delegate commented, "I'm just hanging in there, I don't know how long I'm going to stay."

The left needs to build an anti-austerity alternative now. That's why it's so important that the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition is standing.

Jim Main
Glasgow

Just a thought...

The whinge of the bigots

THE WHINGE of racists, homophobes and sexists worldwide is about "political correctness".

This seems to mean them not being allowed to be as disgusting as they want—and finding out that they're not as popular as they thought.

Julia
Swansea

Spies and fake unions

I SEE recent articles talking about fake unions (Socialist Worker Miners' Special, online). It put me in mind of other historical examples and police infiltration.

Perhaps Socialist Worker might perform a service in reciting a history of police and trade union spies?

D Shepherd
North London

Apprentices or sackings?

ARE YOU aware a well known hardware retailer is laying people off and replacing them with 18-25 year olds to do the same work for £2.80 an hour under the guise of apprenticeships?

It claims £3,000 from the government for employing them. No other country in Europe would allow this.

David Penson
Bracknell

Make up your mind Miliband

PERHAPS ED Miliband's Labour Party—which criticises Cameron for chickening out of a debate—could explain its own mixed messages.

Before the referendum Labour told Scots to vote No as the NHS wasn't under threat of privatisation. Now it says the exact opposite—that the Tories will privatise it.

Mark Richards
Brighton

Oi Dave, no need to bribe

DAVID CAMERON has resorted to bribing students good at maths and science with £15,000 if they become teachers.

If there's a shortage of such teachers, why doesn't he just make teaching conditions for everyone better?

Karen McCarthy
Sheffield

Will Britain soon have too many people?

IS BRITAIN “full up”? The argument chimes with a certain “common sense”—surely more people means less to go round. But this isn’t how population works.

Some of the world’s poorest countries, such as Sudan in north Africa, have much lower population density than Britain, while richer countries such as

Japan have higher population densities.

Wealth is not shared out either fairly nor rationally.

The rich get more than the rest put together, and billions are squandered on weapons of war.

And the pot of wealth is not fixed. Our labour creates wealth.

The level of public services available also shifts.

The government has decided to spend tax money on paying bankers rather than paying for schools.

That’s the real pressure—not population.

Are immigrants a drain on our public services?

MIGRANTS ARE always accused of using services that “we” have paid for.

Yet on average, migrants use public services less than non-migrants—and pay more in taxation.

All serious studies show migrants come to work, not live on benefits. By far the largest single item on the welfare bill is pensions—which accounts for 47 percent.

People who realise this are much less likely to accept the government’s argument that there is no choice but to cut it.

The NHS would grind to a halt without migrant workers. It has relied on migrant labour from the moment it was set up.

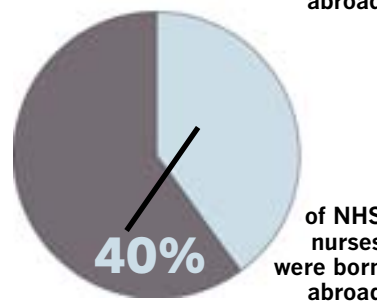
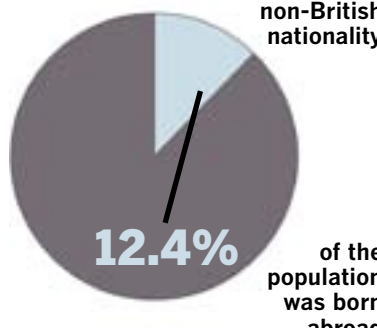
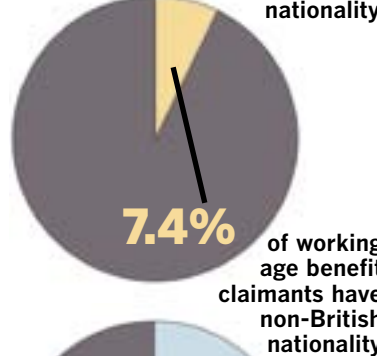
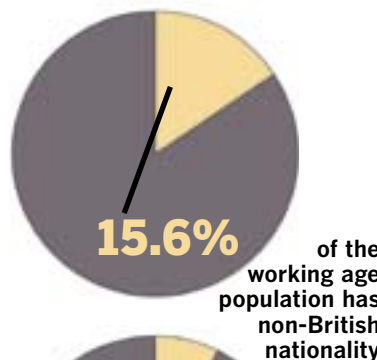
“Health tourism” and “benefit tourism” are myths, as the National Institute of Social and Economic Research conclusively showed in 2013.

A tactic often used by the right is to mix up different categories of migrants—people born overseas, and people with foreign nationality—in order to confuse the figures.

So a migrant who arrived in the 1960s and is now using the NHS more as they get older has been paying for it all their working lives.

Recent migrants are already excluded from some benefits and NHS treatments.

This doesn’t protect public services. It gives an opening to right wing politicians who want to undermine them for everyone.



Will our ‘way of life’ really be ‘swamped’?

POLITICIANS constantly rehash Margaret Thatcher’s 1978 claim that people fear being “swamped by people with a different culture”.

Such a defence of “British values” is outrageous hypocrisy. Ordinary people have fought for democracy in Britain and

everywhere else, while Britain’s elite brought tyranny to millions.

The idea of a fixed British culture is just as fictitious.

The customs of David Cameron’s toff pals are utterly alien to most people living in Britain.

Culture, like language, is always evolving. Immigration has always been part of that.

And people know that food and music in Britain have been improved by immigration.

Even things seen as traditional, such as fish and chips, came with earlier arrivals.

Most people are rightly proud of multiculturalism. But the reality isn’t just distinct cultures coexisting.

We create, and fight for, new ones together.

Swamp thing—Thatcher

DON’T BLAME IMMIGRANTS

Socialist Worker TAKES APART EIGHT OF THE LIES OUR RULERS USE TO DIVIDE US



MOSTLY IMMIGRANT cleaners won better pay and conditions by striking at Soas university in London last year

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

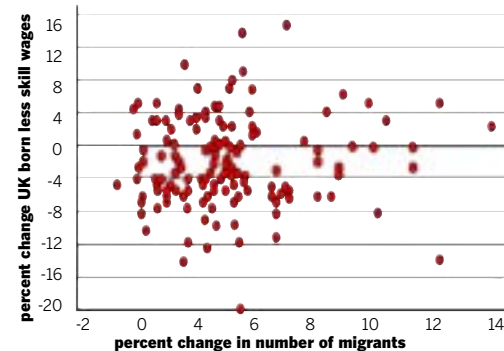
Do migrants worsen pay and conditions?

SOME SAY immigration is good for the rich and the middle classes, but harms unskilled workers because migrants will work for lower wages. Even some trade unionists attack this as “social dumping”.

But studies have repeatedly found no link between migration and falling wages.

A study from the London School of Economics published last month (right) found there is no match between immigration and low wages for unskilled workers across British counties.

It is bosses who try to hold down pay to



Each dot in this graph represents a county. It looks at immigration levels since 2004 and the rise or fall in pay for unskilled workers over that time. The dots fall almost at random—showing no measurable link

make bigger profits. For six million public sector workers, that means the government deciding to keep their wages low.

They want workers to blame each other because it keeps them divided. Workers who resist this division can win better pay for all.

Construction is an industry with a high proportion of migrants, but it is also one with rising wages.

The most powerful strikes in recent years—including those in the NHS—have all involved migrant workers organising alongside their non-migrant colleagues.

Immigrant workers themselves have led struggles that pushed pay up and improved conditions—such as these cleaners at Soas in the University of London (above).

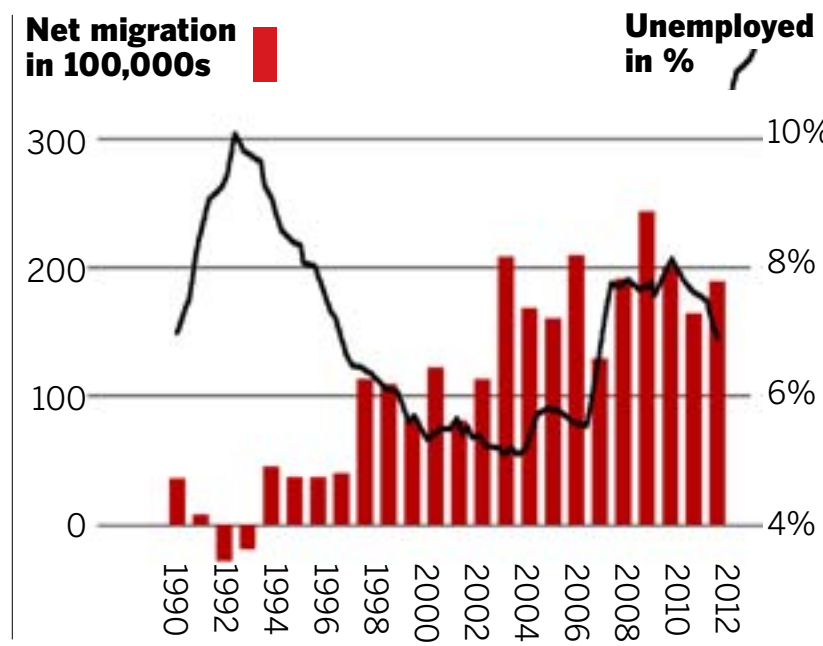
Is immigration a cause of unemployment?

NEWSPAPERS SUCH as the Sun do all they can to suggest that if you can’t get a job it is because of migrants.

But a London School of Economics report last month was clear that, “The evidence on the UK labour market suggests that fears about adverse consequences of rising immigration regularly seen in opinion polls have not, on average, materialised.”

Unemployment goes up when bosses throw workers on the scrapheap, because the system is in recession or because they brought in new methods of production.

Migrants travel looking for work



Hasn’t migration always had to be restricted?

IMMIGRATION controls haven’t always existed. There were no peacetime immigration controls until 1905.

These were brought in alongside racist scare stories as part of a ruling class response to a wave of strikes, often led by migrants.

Modern immigration controls were brought in during the 1960s to try and keep out people from Britain’s former empire.

At the time more people left each year than arrived. Yet successive governments brought in controls designed to keep out non-white migrants.

All immigration controls have been about blaming migrants for social problems rather than controlling the number of people in the country.

As Britain became more integrated with the European Union it relaxed restrictions on people from other member states coming here to work. But this

went alongside the creation of a “Fortress Europe”, which aimed to exclude other workers and paint them as a problem.

Britain’s government refuses to fund rescues for the thousands of desperate people trying to cross the Mediterranean. The Tories want their deaths to be a deterrent.

People have always moved around in search of a better life. What’s barbaric is trying to stop them.

Can immigration controls ever be non-racist?

MANY PEOPLE who are horrified by reports of racism and abuse in detention centres still believe it is possible to have “good” immigration controls.

But complaints about immigrants usually focus on eastern Europeans, or black and Asian people—not Australians and Canadians, Germans or French people.

It’s no coincidence that when

Are immigrants causing the housing crisis?

RENTS ARE going up, and housing is becoming harder to find—especially in London. But who is to blame?

It’s certainly not migrants, who end up with some of the worst and most overcrowded housing.

There is a shortage of housing because not enough is being built. In 2013 only 135,500 homes were built—the lowest since the Second World War. And many of these are luxury flats aimed at the rich. During the 1950s around 300,000 homes a year were built—and most were council homes.

And Britain is full of empty homes.

There are around twice as many bedrooms as there are people. These include properties the rich use as second homes or just as investments whose price they hope will go up. This kind of speculation is one of the key drivers of the housing crisis.

Then there are 50 council estates in London alone marked for demolition and “regeneration” as expensive private rented homes.

The crisis is made worse by absentee owners and property companies. The press likes to focus on those based abroad, but there’s no shortage of British landgrabbers.

The problem isn’t where they come from. It’s that politicians have used regeneration and tax breaks to make our cities a paradise for landlords and spivs.



South London’s Heygate estate was torn down last year

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

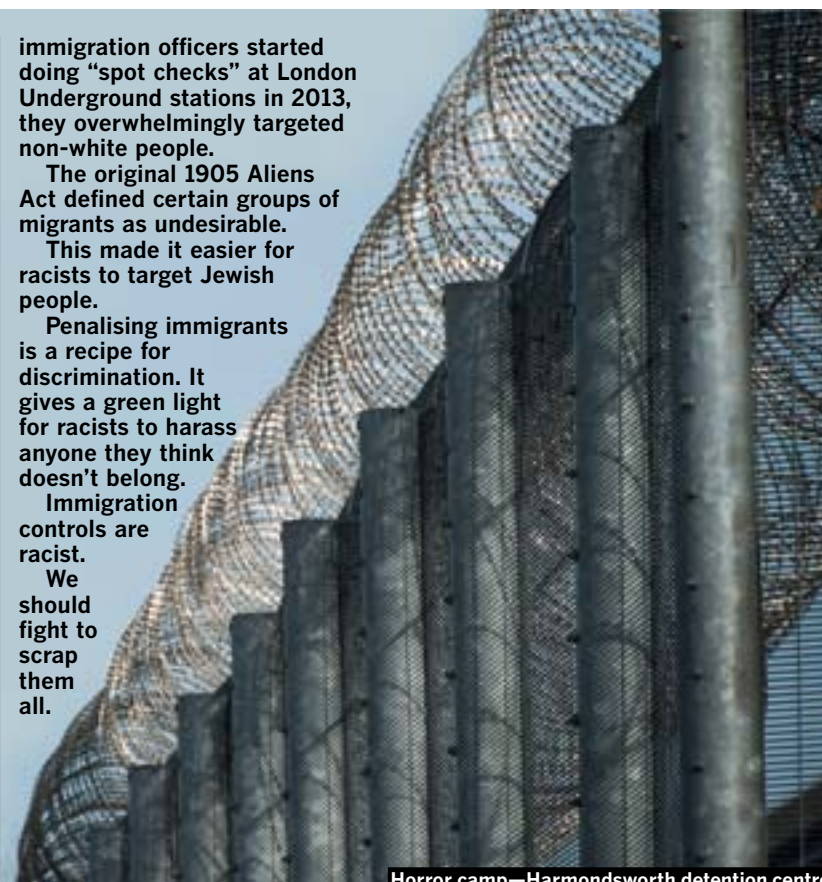
and don’t go to places where they won’t find jobs. Some people come here, just as workers from Britain go to Germany or the Gulf.

When recession means there are fewer jobs immigration goes down.

This is what happened in the 1980s, the early 1990s and after 2008, unrelated to changes in immigration controls.

Fighting Tory job cuts

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER



Horror camp—Harmondsworth detention centre

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7819 1170 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

GLASGOW

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition election campaign—what are the next steps?

Thu 26 Mar, 7.30pm,
O'Neill's, Merchant Square,
71 Albion St, G1 1NY

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

Syriza and socialist strategy

Thu 26 Mar, 7pm,
Priory Rooms, Quaker
Meeting House,
40 Bull St, B4 6AF

BOLTON

Why is the Labour Party so right wing?

Wed 25 Mar, 6.30pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St (off
Bradshawgate),
BL1 1DY

BRADFORD

Socialists and elections

Wed 25 Mar, 7pm,
Equity Centre,
Perkin House,
82 Grattan Rd,
BD1 2LU

BRIGHTON

Marxism and religion

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Ship St, BN1 1AF

BRISTOL: NORTH

Chile 1973—the end of the parliamentary road to socialism

Thu 26 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Canteen, 5th Floor,
Hamilton House,
80 Stokes Croft,
BS1 3QY

BRISTOL: SOUTH

Isis and counter-revolution—a Marxist analysis

Thu 26 Mar, 7pm,
YHA,
Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

CARDIFF

Islamism today

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
Cathays Community Centre,
Cathays Terrace,
CF24 4HX

CHELMSFORD

Immigration—the myths they use to divide us

Thu 16 Apr, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Rainsford Rd,
CM1 2QL

CHESTERFIELD

A rebel's guide to Eleanor Marx

Thu 26 Mar, 7.30pm,
Market Halls,
Market Place,
S40 1PB

COLCHESTER

The revolutionary ideas of Antonio Gramsci

Tue 24 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Odd One Out,
28 Mersea Rd,
CO2 7ET

COVENTRY

Why migrants are not to blame for the economic crisis

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
West Indian Centre,
159 Spon St, CV1 3BB

DERBY

The revolutionary ideas of Eleanor Marx

Thu 26 Mar, 7pm,
West End Community
Centre, Mackworth Rd
(next to Britannia Mill),
DE22 3BL

DORCHESTER

Why we need a revolutionary party

Wed 15 Apr, 7.30pm,
Goldies Bar,
36 High East St,
DT1 1HN

SOCIALIST WORKER BRANCH MEETINGS



Green Party members campaigning against war

How radical are the Greens?

BARNSELY

Thu 26 Mar, 6.30pm,
YMCA, Blucher St,
S70 1AP

CAMBRIDGE

Thu 2 Apr, 7.30pm,
Shanghai Family Restaurant,
39 Burleigh St,
CB1 1DG

DONCASTER

Wed 25 Mar, 7pm,
Women's Centre,
21 Cleveland St,
DN1 3EH

DUDLEY

Marxism and religion

Wed 25 Mar, 8pm,
The What Centre,
23 Coventry St,
Stourbridge, DY8 1EP

DUNDEE

Trade unions—the bureaucracy and the rank and file

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd,
DD1 1LL

ESSEX

To vote or not to vote?

Thu 2 Apr, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Rainsford Rd, CM1 2QL

GLASGOW: SOUTH

Syriza and socialist strategy

Thu 2 Apr, 7.30pm,
Govanhill Baths,
99 Calder St,
G42 7RA

HARLOW

Why we say workers have the power to change the world

Thu 26 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
1 Church Leys, CM18 6BX

HUDDERSFIELD

Socialists and elections

Wed 25 Mar, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House, 2 New
North Parade (near train
and bus stations), HD1 5JP

IPSWICH

Why we say workers have the power to change the world

Tue 7 Apr, 7pm,
Labour Club,
33-35 Silent St, IP1 1TF

KIRKCALDY

30 years on—how the Miners' Strike could have won

Mon 6 Apr, 7.30pm,
Betty Nicol's Pub,
297 High St, KY1 1JL

EDINBURGH

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria Terrace, EH1 2JL

LANCASTER

Thu 16 April, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House
Meeting House Lane,
LA1 1TX

LONDON: HACKNEY

Thu 26 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner
Lower Clapton Rd), E5 0PU

LONDON: NEWHAM

Wed 25 Mar, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove (next
to Morrisons car park),
E15 1HP

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Wed 25 Mar, 7pm,
Oxford House,
Derbyshire St (opp Bethnal
Green Rd Tesco),
E2 6HG

LONDON: EALING

Socialists and elections

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
W3 Gallery,
185 High St, Acton,
W3 9DJ

LONDON: HORNSEY AND WOOD GREEN

50 years since his assassination—the legacy of Malcolm X

Wed 1 Apr, 7.30pm,
West Indian Cultural Centre,
9 Clarendon Rd, Haringey,
N8 0DD

LONDON: ISLINGTON

How do we fight UKip?

Thu 26 Mar, 7pm,
The Old Fire Station,
84 Mayton St,
N7 6QT

LONDON: KINGSTON

The Westminster elite—is the old party system collapsing?

Wed 25 Mar, 7pm,
Kingston Quaker Centre,
Fairfield East, KT1 2PT

LONDON: LEWISHAM

Isis and counter-revolution—a Marxist analysis

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
West Greenwich Community
and Arts Centre,
141 Greenwich High Rd
(near Greenwich main
line and DLR station),
SE10 8JA

LONDON: SOUTHWARK

Syriza and socialist strategy

Thu 26 Mar, 7pm,
Snug Room, The Grand Union,
26 Camberwell Grove (off
Camberwell Church St),
SE5 8RE

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Sexism and the system

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
Quaker Meeting House,
1a Jewel Rd (off Hoe St),
E17 4QU

MANCHESTER: CHORLTON

Can there be a revolution in Britain?

Wed 25 Mar, 7pm,
Proof Bar,
30 Manchester Rd,
M21 0BQ

MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

What do we mean by socialism?

Thu 26 Mar, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

MANCHESTER: LONGSIGHT AND LEVENSHULME

50 years after the assassination of Malcolm X—black lives matter

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
Food Factory,
884 Stockport Rd,
M19 3BN

NEWCASTLE

Syriza and socialist strategy

Thu 26 Mar, 7pm,
The Labour Club,
11 Leazes Park Rd,
NE1 4PF

NORWICH

How real is the economic recovery?

Thu 2 Apr, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place,
NR2 2SA

NOTTINGHAM

Women in revolution

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
International
Community Centre,
61b Mansfield Rd,
NG1 3FN

OXFORD

The history of fighting fascism

Wed 8 Apr, 7.30pm,
Restore,
Manzil Way (off Cowley Rd),
OX4 1YH

PORTSMOUTH

50 years since his assassination—the legacy of Malcolm X

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
Somerstown Central,
Rivers St, PO5 4EY

ROTHERHAM

How do we fight UKip?

Wed 25 Mar, 7pm,
Bridge Inn,
Greasbrough Rd (near bus
and train stations), S60 1RB

SOUTHAMPTON

How can we save the NHS?

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
High Street Cafe,
153 High St,
SO14 2BT

SWANSEA

The myth of personal life under capitalism

Thu 26 Mar, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community Centre,
St Albans Rd,
SA2 0BP

WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

Why you should read the Communist Manifesto

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
Grain Store,
King St,
WV1 1ST

YORK

Ukip and Islamophobia—how do we fight racism today?

Wed 25 Mar, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St, YO10 4AH

{ MOVEMENT EVENTS }

ABERDEEN

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition launch meeting

Thu 26 Mar, 7pm,
The Music Hall,
Union St,
AB10 1QS

DORCHESTER

The origins of Isis

Sat 4 Apr, 1.30pm,
Colliton Club (opposite
County Hall),
Colliton Park,
DT1 1XJ.

organised by Dorset Socialists

GLASGOW

Scrap Trident march and rally

Sat 4 Apr, 10.30am,
George Square
scraptrident.org

LONDON

This Changes Everything 2015

Sat 28 Mar, 9am-6pm
Friends Meeting House,
173-177 Euston Rd,
NW1 2BJ.

Tickets available from
thischangeseverything.co

NATIONAL

Social Work Action Network Tenth Annual Conference

Fri 10-Sat 11 Apr
University of the West of
Scotland (Paisley campus)
socialworkfuture.org

Marxism 2015 festival

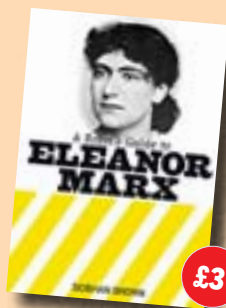
Thu 9—Mon 13 Jul,
Central London.
marxismfestival.org.uk

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Modern tales of ordinary lives, morality and deception

BBC One's new drama *Ordinary Lies* tries to present modern day morality tales about duplicity—but can itself seem a bit unbelievable, writes **Ellie May**

DO YOU ever wonder how the “ordinary lies” people tell in social situations could spin out of control? Well, writer Danny Brocklehurst's new drama *Ordinary Lies* tries to explore just that.

The show is set in a car showroom in Warrington.

Each episode follows the life of a different character and looks at their relationships in and outside of work.

In the first one we're introduced to salesperson Marty McLean (Jason Manford) who's hungover and late for work.

Different scenes seem to provide snapshots of ordinary social situations.

Rushing downstairs to the kitchen, he finds his wife, Katrina (Erin Shanagher), and their two children.

Marty pushes Katrina out of the way to grab some breakfast.

He then tries to address his kids with a mixture of the “tough guy” dad act and awkward enthusiasm, with promises of playing with them on the Xbox.

When Marty gets to work, he has to crawl beneath the windows so no one realises he's late.

Cameras

Unluckily, his boss Mike (Max Beesley) sees him on the security cameras. He's dragged into the office and put on his final warning.

The next day Martin is late again.

Initially he takes it out on Katrina, shouting, “Why didn't you wake me up?”

He can't face losing his job, so phones from the showroom gates claiming his wife has died.

But despite his best efforts, Marty can't keep up the lie forever as it begins to consume his life.

We also see a future plot developing.

The HR head Beth's (Jo Joyner) husband has been missing for a year, but now she starts receiving unidentified phone calls.

Mike's marriage is also falling apart, and it looks something might develop between them.

But everyone here is hiding a lie. Brocklehurst explained that, “They are all modern morality tales. Every single episode, without being preachy, is a story about an aspect of modern life.”

The show does deal with ordinary people and the pressures that modern life puts us under.

But it tries too hard to be “ordinary”, and the plot can sometimes come across as contrived.

Ordinary Lies
BBC One
Tuesday, 9pm

Art and revolution



FRANCISCO GOYA, Brush, black and grey ink, 1816-20

Facing the horror of reaction restored

EXHIBITION

GOYA—THE WITCHES AND OLD WOMEN ALBUM

Courtauld Gallery, London WC2R 0RN.
Until 25 May.
Adults £8.50, unwaged £4,
18s and under free.
courtauld.ac.uk

AS THE Spanish royal court's painter, Francisco Goya was at the heart of its sickening conservative trappings and its rituals.

He painted grand romantic portraits of the king and his courtiers in the tradition of the late romantic movement, which Europe's crowned heads so beloved.

Goya made his living this way from the 1780s until 1824.

He worked through the French invasion in the 1800s and the Spanish monarchy's restoration after Napoleon Bonaparte's nephew's short reign.

But he seemed to have led a

untroubled life in such turbulent times.

His art reflects the new times after the overthrow of reaction.

It moved from studio portraits to scenes of the Peninsular War and experimental images of national and peasant wars.

But the new times stalled when reaction was restored in 1814 with the help of the British.

Goya survived and continued his courtly work under the restored monarchy. He seemed the perfect survivor, trimming his art to suit the client.

However, when he died an even more remarkable series of work known as the “black paintings” was discovered.

No one, perhaps only a few close friends, were aware of it.

Private rooms were found in his house, which were painted all black with scenes of monsters, nightmares, war and destruction.

Eight albums of similar drawings were also found, which were later sold and dispersed.

This exhibition brings together one of these eight books, the *Witches and Old Women* album of 23 drawings.

They are remarkable and astonishing drawings, which show Goya as an amazing draftsman of the imagination but also an impassioned critic of the old order.

While his pictures of the war are full of anguish, they retain hope for a new world.

There isn't just bitterness, but a dark wit with musings on life in an imploding society.

The drawings dance and whirl and sum up the emotion of Goya's plight—to live in a society where an aborted revolution has collapsed in on itself.

What can one do then, but wryly comment on the dark side's triumph with black humour and wit. These paintings haunt, taunt, intrigue on the irony and horror of it all—and leer at the coming face of death.

Noel Halifax

EXHIBITION

REAL ESTATES

Peer Gallery, London, N1 6QL.
Until 28 March.
peeruk.org

REAL ESTATES is a series of exhibitions centred on housing, which brings together activists and local residents.

Previous weeks have featured photographers Moyra Peralta and Bekki Perriman's work on homelessness.

The DIG Collective's photography about the demolition of old Hackney was also on show.

The Focus E15 mothers led off the fifth week, with banners and films from their campaign for housing.

During the final week, beginning on 25 March, designer Smart Urhiofe's

Perriman, *The Doorways Project*

Ghana Must Go bags will combine bling and politics.

Several short films of local estates and residents past and present will be shown.

There are also several feature films being shown over the programme, including *Cathy Come Home*, *Nostalgia for the Light* and *Spirit of '45*.

It is marvellous to see a gallery connecting key social issues with its local community and campaigns. Try to join in this very diverse programme.

Paul Murphy

TOP 5 BOOKS

Bestsellers at Bookmarks, the socialist Bookshop

- Blacklisted**
Dave Smith and Phil Chamberlain
- This Changes Everything**
Naomi Klein
- A Rebel's Guide to Eleanor Marx**
Siobhan Brown
- NHS Not for Sale**
David Wrigley, John Lister and Jacky Davis
- Blair Peach—Socialist and Anti-Racist**
Nick Grant and Brian Richardson

Phone 020 7637 1848
bookmarksbookshop.co.uk
Why not visit the shop at 1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE

SYRIZA'S victory in the Greek election was an historic victory for the Greek left. And it could be a turning point in the class struggle throughout Europe.

But it's also an event of strategic and theoretical significance. The great strategic debates that Marxists once had are returning.

It raises questions not just about reform and revolution, but how to combine different struggles and what kind of parties to build.

Stathis Kouvelakis has played an important role in setting Syriza's development in that context, particularly in his articles for Jacobin magazine.

The crucial reference point for his strategy is Nikos Poulantzas, who articulated a left wing version of what was called Eurocommunism in the late 1970s.

He aimed to achieve democratic socialism—a rupture with capitalism.

This may be the aim of Stathis and the left of Syriza, but it is not the objective of the Syriza leadership.

Yanis Varoufakis, the current Greek finance minister, said two years ago “we, the suitably erratic Marxists” must “try to save European capitalism from itself”. This describes the strategy Syriza has pursued since the election.

It sees austerity as the wrong policy to pursue from a capitalist point of view.

Capitalism

But European capitalism shows absolutely no sign of wanting to be saved from itself.

Instead, the leading forces in the eurozone are using all the power at their command to brutally reimpose austerity.

Stathis and I agree on the bankruptcy of trying to negotiate with these institutions. So what about his alternative strategy?

Poulantzas wanted to combine struggle inside parliament with struggle outside, particularly by workers, and the development of direct forms of democracy.

This presupposes that the state is a relatively incoherent set of institutions, one that reflects the pressure of class struggles.

A strong enough series of struggles could increase that incoherence, and bring sections of the state onto the side of the workers and the left.

Henri Weber, a leading figure on the far left in France, challenged Poulantzas on this. He agreed that there are contradictions in the state, and that we need to organise workers it employs—such as teachers and civil servants.

But “the core of the state apparatus will polarise to the right” in any great moment of crisis, and there will have to be a “test of strength” against it.

That's the basis of the

SYRIZA AND SOCIALIST STRATEGY

PART TWO OF TWO



Alex Callinicos argues that any successful socialist strategy has to build working class strength to take on the repressive core of the state



Alex Callinicos

revolutionary option of dual power. This means developing powerful mass struggles and organisations that can become the basis for an alternative form of state.

Weber later became an awful reformist bastard, but what he said then was right.

He warned that if we don't understand this, we risk being defeated without a real fight.

And that's exactly what it felt like with the Brussels agreement. In Greece, as in Turkey

fascist party Golden Dawn is its links with the Deep State. And unfortunately Golden Dawn wasn't smashed electorally.

It was a mistake when Syriza formed a coalition with the right wing Independent Greeks, as Stathis pointed out at the time.

There's a temptation to think you can “box clever” and perform cunning manoeuvres to divide your enemies. Varoufakis embodies this.

But it wasn't cunning to bring into the government a fifth column linked to the historic right and the “deep state”.

Against all the forces deployed against Syriza, the only force it can count on is the mobilisation of the masses.

But historically governments of the left often tend to discourage independent mass mobilisation because it can limit their room for manoeuvre.

In Greece there was a significant falling off in mass struggles from early 2012.

It reflected people saying we need a political solution. Just going on strike isn't enough, so we should get Syriza into office then see what happens. There was an element of waiting for Syriza.

It's true there was a need to shift from the social to the political.

But it's not just that 32 general strikes didn't work. In a crisis of that severity one-day general strikes aren't enough.

IT WAS necessary to move to a higher level of struggle, with open-ended general strikes. This would have produced a very different dynamic.

But the leadership of the workers' movement wasn't willing to contemplate that. And revolutionary forces weren't strong enough to impose it.

In any case, the electoral road was followed. And sometimes elections can bring new layers of the masses into left politics in a new way.

Syriza's victory represents very large sections of the working class and other oppressed sections of society in Greece becoming much more articulately politically self-conscious.

That's partly what makes it so significant. This is a lesson about not dismissing electoral politics—and it counters all the nonsense about “anti-politics”.

Now the radical left's responsibility is to promote the ability of workers and other oppressed and exploited groups to organise and act for themselves.

It's great that people from the left of Syriza are now ministers. But we've seen this in Britain.

Tony Benn had senior ministerial posts in the Labour government of 1974-79.

He became a prisoner of that government.

There is an alternative to the retreat. Stathis and others spelt out it very clearly.

It is to break with the euro, nationalise the banks and

impose capital controls.

And these measures must be backed up by very strong appeals for solidarity to the anti-austerity movement and the working class throughout Europe.

This requires an open and clear political fight for that alternative and against any retreat.

For the last few years there's been an argument over whether the anti-capitalist left should join Syriza or organise independently through the Antarsya coalition. Antarsya got a lot of flack.

But the test of those anti-capitalists inside Syriza is, will they resist the retreat that has taken place?

At the general level that Stathis stated the Gramscian strategy, I agree with it. But I absolutely disagree about leaving the initiative to the other side.

The other side will organise to destroy a real government of the left.

We're already seeing that externally, from the Eurogroup. We'll see it develop internally if the right and the ruling class begin to smell a weakening and a retreat by Syriza.

This was the tragedy of Chile in 1973—that left wing president Salvador Allende left the initiative to the other side.

The Cuban embassy tried to warn him, these bastards are coming to get you. You have to organise, develop your side in the armed forces, arm the workers.

He refused, hoping to preserve the constitutional illusion. Allende thought he could divide the other side and win over “progressive” elements—such as general Augusto Pinochet who eventually led the coup that killed him.

Frederick Engels had talk about the slave-owners' rebellion.

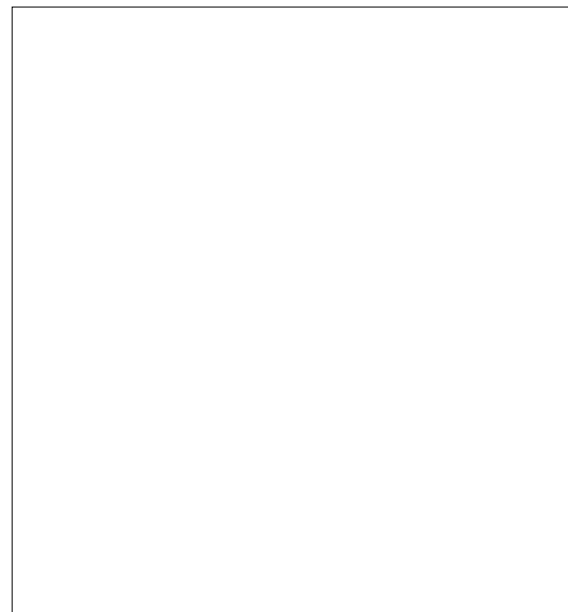
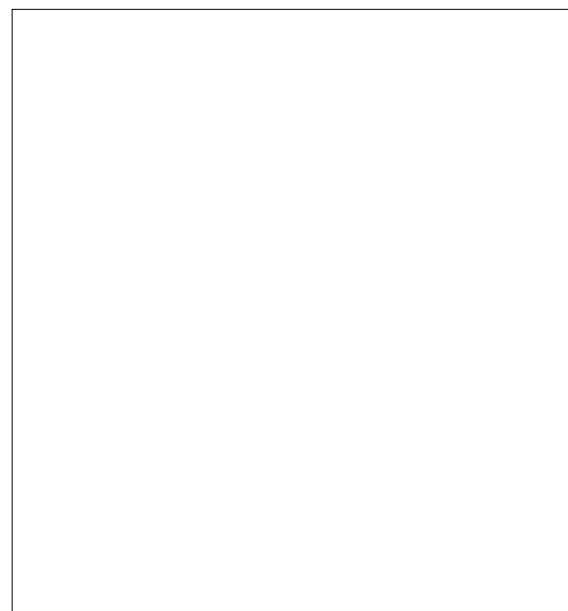
But the point wasn't that letting this happen was US president Abraham Lincoln's most glorious moment. They nearly captured the capital, Washington.

There's no reason for history to repeat itself.

We'd be mistaken to talk as if Syriza has failed. This is just the opening phase of the struggle.

All the forces of the radical left will have to get together to move the situation forward now the other side has won the first round.

Resuming the offensive



Protest against the fascist Golden Dawn party (top) that has links to the deep state, which collaborated with the Nazis and helped the military junta. Greece's last king and the junta pose a year after the 1967 coup (above)

means breaking the illusion in Europe.

On that we agree. But it also means beginning to absorb the crucial lessons of revolutionary struggles over the last 150 years.

Any successful Gramscian strategy must give us the strength to take on the repressive core of the state.

One of Stathis's articles in Jacobin was given the headline “Syriza's magical equation”.

But there are no magical equations. There's just the logic of capital and the logic of the class struggle.

At a very important moment like this, part of the duty of the left is to state that clearly.

We must point to the realities—then concentrate all our efforts and organisation on changing them.

DEBATE

This was part of a debate hosted by the International Socialism journal (ISJ).

Alex Callinicos is on the central committee of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and editor of the ISJ. This is his response to Stathis Kouvelakis, who is a leading left

wing member of Syriza's central committee

You can read Stathis's piece in part one online at socialistworker.co.uk/art/40099/S

Watch the debate at isj.org.uk or youtube.com/watch?v=FV2jCTBjlpQ



The drugs don't work—behind our rulers' Afghan lies

John Newsinger cuts through our rulers' tears for the British dead in Afghanistan. Here he exposes the corrupt narco regime imposed by the West

ON FRIDAY the 13th —no less—a memorial service was held at St Paul's Cathedral in London to commemorate British soldiers who died in Afghanistan.

A good few of those responsible for the fiasco, including Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, were present.

They faked sympathy for the dead and injured, hoping to sustain the myth that the war was “worthwhile”. This is a lie.

When the US invaded Afghanistan in 2001 to overthrow the Taliban regime, it put in power the warlords, gangsters and drug traffickers of the Northern Alliance.

Hamid Karzai, the president between 2004 and 2014, was the presentable face of this new regime.

It was as if the US had invaded Columbia to put the drug cartels in power.

Control

In 2000 and 2001, the Taliban had successfully eradicated opium production in most of Afghanistan. Production only continued in the areas under the Northern Alliance's control.

But when the warlords came into power, opium production quickly boomed.

In 2001 opium production was 185 tons, but by 2007 it had rocketed to 8,200 tons.

The Afghan regime had established itself at the heart of the international heroin trade and production. It was a narcotics state run by a local mafia and defended by US and British troops.

According to one researcher working for Nato, Afghanistan under Karzai wasn't just a “mafia state”. But “even by the standards of mafia rule, the post-2002 Afghan system comes up short”.

The US military commander general David

LEADERS AT THE Cenotaph last year

BACK STORY

The US led an invasion of Afghanistan in 2001

● It was officially in response to the 9/11 attacks

● The US and its allies deposed the Taliban government

● It put the drug trafficking Northern Alliance into government

● Corruption boomed under the new regime

● It was never a war for democracy—but for imperialist interests

“trouble shooter” to root out corruption, he gave the job to Izzatullah Wasifi.

This was a man who had been arrested in Las Vegas, Nevada, trying to sell heroin worth some £1.3 million.

As well as drugs, the warlords and traffickers of course prey on their own people.

Pillaging

But they have also been involved in pillaging billions of dollars from international aid donations.

In 2011, around £3 billion left the country in suitcases and cardboard boxes for investment in Bahrain, London and elsewhere.

This was the equivalent of Afghanistan's annual budget. The Afghan criminal elite has billions invested abroad, while the country remains one of the poorest in the world.

And the massive electoral fraud that determined the 2009 election surely removed any fig-leaf that the war was about democracy or good governance.

Despite the worst ballot-rigging that observers had ever seen, Karzai remained in power.

British troops were in Afghanistan propping up a gangster regime for one reason and one reason only—the “special relationship”.

They were there so that the Labour government could keep in with the US.

None of this was mentioned at the memorial service, although many of those there know it is the truth.

The Afghan regime was a narco state run by a US-British backed mafia

Barnet ballot over outsourcing

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

TORY-CONTROLLED Barnet council in north London has provoked a major strike ballot of Unison union members against mass outsourcing.

Its targets for outsourcing include social work, libraries, children's centres and school meals.

Barnet Unison warns that "upwards of 80 percent" of council jobs would be outsourced.

The ballot closes on 8 April.

Unison branch chair Helen Davies spoke to Socialist Worker in a personal capacity about the impact of privatisation—and the fight against it.

Helen argued the Tory government's cuts are not about a lack of money, but an attack on public services.

"All councils are now looking at how they can shift their spending," Helen said.

Social services accounts for the lion's share of council budgets, but don't normally generate income.

This puts pressure on councils to make them profit-making.

Barnet council has led the charge in privatisation, and abandoned its role of directly delivering services in 2010.



YOUR CHOICE Barnet pickets at the Rosa Morrison adult day care centre last month

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

In the last three years alone it rejected the in-house option for 11 out of 12 outsourcing projects.

Helen said its privatisation of adult social care "has become the model" for commissioning.

Barnet is now in a race with other councils to see which can be first to privatise everything.

Northamptonshire County

Council recently voted to outsource all services, cut £68 million, and transfer almost 4,000 staff to four new bodies.

Helen explained that this has big implications for workers and the services.

"The uniform experience of outsourcing in Barnet has been redundancies and cuts to terms

and conditions."

If workers leave after outsourcing they're replaced by others who are not in the local government pension scheme.

In Barnet this can save bosses an enormous 25 percent of the wage bill.

But the council hasn't even paid workers' pension contributions

at Your Choice Barnet (YCB), the council-controlled care provider.

Bosses have used the pensions deficit to attack workers.

They've cut staff by 30 percent since 2012 and now want to slash pay by 9.5 percent.

Lower staffing levels pushed up workloads and the use of agency workers, which drove down the quality of care.

The Care Quality Commission watchdog recently slammed YCB as "inadequate" and "requiring improvement".

YCB workers have struck repeatedly against the pay cut and to defend local services. They are likely to strike again later this month.

Helen argues, "Privatisation in social care has been disastrous and starts to look very dangerous when you transfer that across to social workers."

"That's why we're balloting the entire branch. It needs to be resisted at all costs."

Send messages of support to contactus@barnetunison.org.uk. Helen will be speaking at the Social Work Action Network conference, 10-11 April, University of the West of Scotland, Paisley PA1 2BE. socialworkfuture.org

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Top cop during Hillsborough admits ‘far reaching deceit’

After former chief superintendent David Duckenfield testified to the Hillsborough inquests, **Sadie Robinson** examines the evidence and the actions he took on the day

RELATIVES OF fans who died as a result of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster walked out of inquests into their deaths in disgust on Friday of last week.

Former chief superintendent David Duckenfield, match commander on the day of the disaster, was continuing his evidence.

He told relatives that he was “dreadfully sorry” for the deaths. One replied, “I don’t want your apology.”

Some 96 Liverpool fans died as a result of a crush in pens 3 and 4 at the Hillsborough football stadium in 1989.

Under questioning by Michael Mansfield QC, Duckenfield admitted that he was “practising and persisted in a far-reaching deceit” over his role in the disaster.

Duckenfield ordered a gate to be opened at 2.52pm to relieve a crush outside the Leppings Lane turnstiles.

At around 3.15pm he told Graham Kelly and Glen Kirton from the Football Association, and Graham Mackrell from Sheffield Wednesday Football Club, that Liverpool fans had forced a gate.

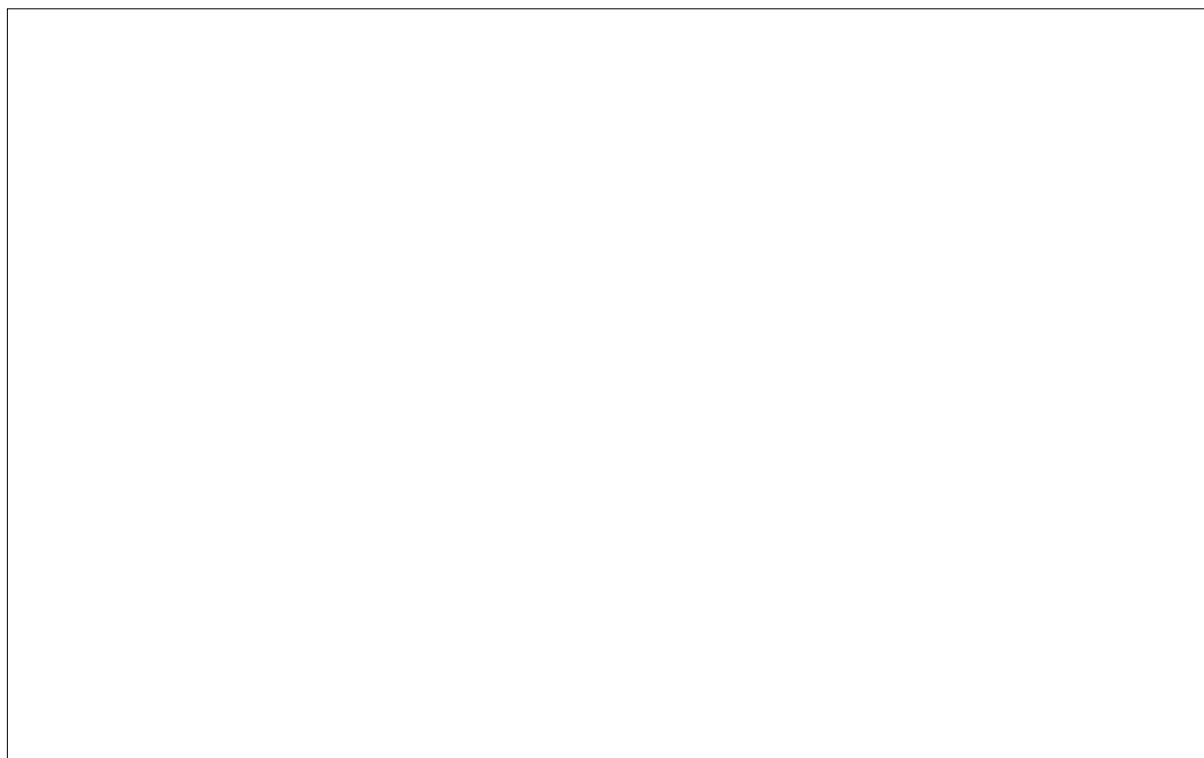
Disclose

He said that failing to disclose that “the gates had been opened by me and that may have contributed to the disaster” was a “dreadful mistake”.

He said he realised this as soon as the officials had left the control box.

Duckenfield went to the football club board room just before 3.35 to give “an update”. He agreed that this would have been a “golden opportunity” to correct his earlier lie. He did not do so.

Duckenfield told the court that “football fans played a part” in the disaster. He said if Merseyside Police



A TRIBUTE to the 96 Liverpool fans killed as a result of the 1989 Hillsborough stadium disaster

had told him “it was common knowledge that Liverpool fans arrived late, having had a drink, and expected to get in at the last minute” he “might have been able to act differently”.

Mansfield said, “But that’s not what happened.”

The court was shown footage of the Leppings Lane turnstiles at 2.06pm, 2.11pm, 2.13pm, 2.14pm, 2.16pm and 2.30pm. Duckenfield agreed that it showed fans arriving in good time.

There were 23 turnstiles for 24,000 Liverpool fans. Duckenfield

agreed that a reasonably competent match commander could have taken several measures to stop the crush at the turnstiles.

Control

Duckenfield said the situation at 2.44 or 2.45pm was “out of hand” and said police control of the crowd had been lost.

Duckenfield was shown footage of pens 3 and 4 at 2.49pm and agreed they were “full”. The footage showed fans already climbing out of the pens.

Duckenfield initially thought this was “crowd disorder”.

Up to 2,000 fans entered the pens after Duckenfield ordered the gate to be opened.

Duckenfield failed to warn police or stewards that he was going to order the gate open. He failed to close the tunnel to pens 3 and 4. He accepted that this resulted in a crush.

The inquests continue.

For a longer version of this article and updates see socialistworker.co.uk/art/40124/H

No record of major incident

THE COURT heard of delays in the police response to the disaster.

At 3.04pm a fan collapsed on the pitch. The police control box requested dog handlers. Duckenfield said they might have been needed “to put a line across the pitch for my secure area for rescue”.

At 3.06pm police requested operation support. Duckenfield said that meant “manpower” and that he needed officers to help with the rescue operation.

Rajiv Menon QC asked, “What rescue operation? You have yet to call for ambulances or fire crews.”

Duckenfield said he thought he had declared a major incident but added, “I can’t do everything at once.”

There is no record of a major incident in the police log.

Duckenfield told the court he did not know the codeword for a major incident.

Police requested a fleet of ambulances two minutes and 40 seconds after requesting dog handlers and asked for cutting equipment to cut the pen fences at 3.14pm.

Ambulance at Hillsborough

QC asks if Duckenfield was ‘coached’ for testifying

DUCKENFIELD repeatedly referred to his lack of experience when giving evidence to the inquests.

Rajiv Menon QC asked if Duckenfield had been “coached to stress your inexperience as much as you possibly can”. He said no.

Duckenfield confirmed that he was a freemason at the time of the Hillsborough disaster.

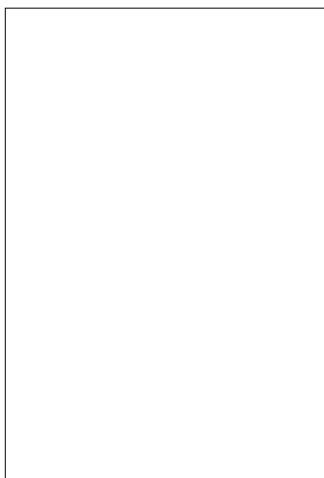
Menon asked if Duckenfield’s promotion prior to the match was connected with that fact. Duckenfield said he “wouldn’t know”.

He could not confirm

whether the chief constable of South Yorkshire Police (SYP) was a freemason, but said he wasn’t a freemason in the Yorkshire area.

Duckenfield repeatedly told the inquests that he could “not recall” many things regarding the disaster. But he was “completely confident” that he declared a major incident. And he could “categorically state” that he “never spoke” to other police officers during their journey to SYP headquarters.

Menon said, “When it suits you, you can’t remember. When you want



Margaret Thatcher and Duckenfield (centre) tour Hillsborough

to assert something, your memory is absolutely fine.”

Duckenfield replied, “This is one of the strange realities of post traumatic stress disorder.”

Menon suggested that there had been a police cover-up in the aftermath of the disaster.

Duckenfield could not explain why he did not mention his conversation with Kelly, Kirton and Mackrell (see above) in his statement. All police officers in the control box left that conversation out of their statements.

Duckenfield said, “I never conferred with any

other officer and it is merely a coincidence”.

Duckenfield accepted that he met Margaret Thatcher in the days after the disaster, but said he couldn’t remember details of the meeting.

Duckenfield said he had not been part of building the police case against drunken fans after the disaster as he had been “marginalised”.

Menon said there must have been a strategy for dealing with his lie that fans forced a gate.

Duckenfield replied, “I’m sure there was but I wasn’t party to it.”

IN BRIEF

Activists meet to debate Tube action

RMT UNION activists met to discuss the possibility of further strikes on London Underground on Monday of this week.

The meeting was called to consider the latest offer from pay talks with bosses, which the union described as “pitiful” and “unacceptable”.

The meeting’s outcome was unclear as Socialist Worker went to press.

Standing room only against austerity

UP TO 150 people packed into the North London People’s Assembly last Saturday. They heard speakers included Owen Jones, Green Party leader Natalie Bennett and Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn.

The format limited debates on strategy. But there was strong support for this Saturday’s anti-racism march and the national anti-austerity demonstration set for 20 June.

Workers say milk boss smells off

THE GMB union is balloting milk delivery drivers based in Leeds for strikes to defend jobs and conditions.

The workers deliver to supermarket chains in the north of England.

Their new employer Moran Logistics has not guaranteed pay and conditions.

The drivers voted by 98 percent to strike in a consultative ballot last week.

Radical debates at Dundee conference

OVER 200 activists attended the Radical Independence Conference in Dundee last Saturday. Workshops included discussions of gender, trade unions and welfare cuts.

It showed continued interest in alternative radical ideas to the mainstream political parties as people ask what kind of left is needed to challenge austerity.

Bolton anniversary event over policing

THE justice4bolton campaign was set to hold an anniversary event on Friday of this week.

It marks five years since police attacked anti-fascist protesters in the town.

●Our Five-year Fight for Justice—Fri 20 Mar, 12.30pm, Victoria Square, Bolton. justice4bolton.org

Climate conference will debate action

THIS CHANGES Everything 2015 will debate alternatives to capitalism next weekend to combat climate change.

●Sat 28 Mar, 9am-6pm, Friends Meeting House, 173-177 Euston Rd, London NW1 2BJ. thischangeeverything.co

ANTI-BLACKLISTING



RANK AND file construction workers and supporters blocked London’s Oxford Street last week over sackings on the Crossrail project. More info bit.ly/1Est3uS

PICTURE: JULIE SHERRY

EDUCATION

College cuts stoke anger at government

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

THE EIS Fela further education union held its annual conference last week against a backdrop of anger over huge cuts. Delegates voted for a national demo and lobby of the Scottish National Party (SNP) Scottish government over funding.

Further education (FE) colleges have been “under constant attack since the age of austerity” EIS Fela president John Kelly told Socialist Worker. He said, “Colleges in Scotland are not in a good state at the moment.”

The past few years have seen student numbers drop by more

than 100,000 and almost 7,000 staff have gone. The SNP has tried to disguise its cuts through a major restructure, creating ten larger regional colleges through mergers.

Rift

The mergers have caused rifts between college bosses and the government after further education was brought back into the public sector.

This forms part of the background to three college principals being sacked and suspended this year.

Edinburgh College EIS branch secretary Penny Gower told Socialist Worker, “Principals got used to being unaccountable, overpaid and

full of themselves.

“The mergers mean they are now subordinate to political appointments by the government. So one aspect is a power struggle at the top.”

But workers’ resistance has also played a critical role.

Penny said, “The recent suspension in Glasgow was precipitated by a letter from the EIS branch laying out a whole series of criticisms.

“And at Edinburgh the principal was dumped after being trounced by a lecturer strike and huge vote to work to rule.”

As anger at cuts and expectations on the SNP to break with austerity grows, it makes for an explosive cocktail.

LONDON MET UNIVERSITY

Staff shock over massive attack on jobs

THE NEW vice chancellor of London Metropolitan University has announced 165 redundancies. Stunned workers say this could be the “beginning of the end” for the college.

Rob Murthwaite is a branch officer of the UCU union at London Met.

He told Socialist Worker, “It’s a massive number of job cuts. In the business and law department, they want to cut 75.1 posts from a total of 130. It’s more than decimation.”

Unions at the college are



London Met strike in 2013

meeting this week and next to discuss their response and possible strikes against the cuts.

adult further education.

The UCU union called the lobby. The Tories are slashing funding by up to 24 percent. Over 15,000 people have signed a petition against the cuts.

The union has also called a march against the cuts on Wednesday of next week.

●Join the lobby—1pm, Wednesday 18 March, main entrance to the House of Commons.

Workers are also approaching the student union.

Rob said, “We have the largest number of black students of any college in the country. More than half of our students are from manual, working class backgrounds.

“We have the largest number of women returning to education of any college. You wonder if bosses actually want a college like ours to continue.”

Sadie Robinson

ROUND-UP

■UCU UNION members at Greenwich college in south east London have voted for strikes to defend contracts.

Workers backed strikes by 94 percent and also action short of a strike by 95 percent in a recent ballot. The turnout was 49 percent.

■LECTURERS AND students were set to lobby parliament on Wednesday of this week against funding cuts to

MANUFACTURING

Juice boss faces walkouts

MANUFACTURING workers in Bridgwater, Somerset, walked out in the seventh of 11 planned 36-hour strikes at fruit juice maker Refresco-Gerber last week.

The Unite union members are furious at plans to cut pay and worsen conditions in a bid to boost profits following a recent merger.

Bosses’ plans include cuts to sick pay, overtime and bank holiday pay, holiday entitlement, shift allowances and pay protection.

This would put new staff on about £5,000 less than long-term employees—some would lose £8,000 a year.



Refresco-Gerber strikers

More than 430 workers are involved in the action.

Unite officer Roy Winter said, “We are talking here of corporate greed. Refresco-Gerber is making a bad mistake.”

STUDENTS

ANTI-RACIST student and member of the Socialist Worker Student Society, Saba Shiraz was elected Black Members Officer at Birkbeck University in London last week with 44.3 percent of the vote.

Saba said, “From the Tories’ new counter-terrorism

laws to the killing of Michael Brown by police in the US, the past year has been a clear reminder—racism is still a serious problem.

“I encourage all students to join the Rage against Racism demonstrations this Saturday in London, Glasgow and Cardiff.”

GENERAL ELECTION

Vote SNP, says Solidarity

SOCIALIST PARTY Solidarity held a specially reconvened conference last Saturday to discuss its position on the general election. Around 65 people attended.

It was agreed not to stand candidates in May and urge people who voted Yes in the independence referendum last year to “lend their vote to SNP candidates”.

Leading socialist politician Tommy Sheridan is convenor of Solidarity.

Socialist Workers Party members argued against this and instead called on Solidarity to campaign for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. They also called for a stronger, more united left in Scotland to resist austerity. Bob Fotheringham

MINERS

HUNDREDS ATTENDED a 30th anniversary Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) event last Saturday in the Onllwyn Miners Hall in South Wales.

It was organised by LGSM and the Neath Dulais and Swansea Valley Miners Support Group.

LGSM has reformed, with a radical plan to put on a political contingent on London Pride.

●Join LGSM Pride 2015 Facebook group to get involved

TUC

SOME 200 attended the Trades Union Congress (TUC) women’s conference in London last week.

PCS union executive member Marianne Owens spoke about the importance of trade unions supporting Abortion Rights.

Socialist Worker supporters talked about the need to resist the main parties’ and Ukip’s racist scapegoating.

Delegates also sent solidarity to victimised PCS union rep Candy Udwin.

ANTI-ACADEMIES

Protest: ‘Je suis Hewett’

UP TO 350 people marched through Norwich last Saturday against plans to turn a school into an academy.

The Tories want Hewett School to become an academy sponsored by the Inspiration Trust.

Norfolk County Council has threatened a High Court challenge to the plan.

Protesters carried placards reading, “Hands off Hewett” and “Je Suis Hewett”.

■TEACHERS AT three schools in Lewisham, south east London, were set to begin a two-day strike on Tuesday of next week.

The action, in opposition to threats to turn the schools into academies, will hit Hilly Fields, Ladywell Fields and the Vale.

A march against the academy plan is set to take place this Saturday, assemble 12 noon by the Clock Tower, Lewisham High Street.

HOUSING

Aylesbury demo says leave our homes alone

by DAVE SEWELL

RESIDENTS AND campaigners in Southwark, south London, marched through the Aylesbury estate last Saturday to protest against plans to demolish it.

The march—called by Defend Council Housing and backed by other housing groups and trade unions—swelled to 300 people as passers-by joined in.

Margo lived on the Aylesbury for 15 years. She saw Tony Blair make his first speech as prime minister there.

She told Socialist Worker, “There are journalists paid tens of thousands of pounds to make this sound like the estate from hell. We’ve said no to demolition and the politicians have ignored us.”

Laura of Aylesbury Tenants and Leaseholders First told the crowd, “I’ve lived here for 30 years. I love my home. And I’ve always been able to afford the rent.”

Heygates

She led chants of “Save the Aylesbury—no more Heygates”.

The Heygate estate was knocked down last year. Student Rubina’s relatives lost their homes—and had to leave south London to find somewhere they could afford.



TENANTS AND supporters on the Aylesbury estate demonstration

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

She said, “It’s getting really expensive to stay in London. They need to stop demolishing council houses. Refurbish them—but don’t hand them over to private investors.”

A cheer went up when local Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate Nick Wrack called for building more council homes.

Since late January activists have occupied empty flats—and Southwark council has responded with metal fences

and security guards.

Council tenant Dean supported the occupation. “Fighting the demolition is swimming against the tide—but you can’t give up hope,” he told Socialist Worker.

Protester Susanna said she’d voted Tory all her life, “but these occupations are the only way now. It’s impossible for young people to get even a small flat like we did in the 1970s.”

Occupiers diverted the

protest into breaching the fences around previously occupied flats. Some activists got back inside—but most protesters scattered faced with clashes with security and cops.

The protest attracted a wide range of people worried about housing. But while the occupation has helped push the Aylesbury up the political and media agenda, there is a need for tactics that can broaden the movement.

HOUSING

Union ballot at Tata Steel

THE UNITE, GMB and Community unions are set to ballot their members working for steel giant Tata Steel over bosses’ attacks on their pensions.

Tata Steel bosses are planning to shut down the workers’ final salary pension scheme in April 2016.

They are trying to replace it with a defined contribution scheme, which could leave workers worse off.

Bosses claim the changes are necessary to ensure “competitive future pension provision”.

But unions have pointed out that last November the assets of the British Steel Pensions Scheme were valued at around £13.6 billion and have continued to increase.

The changes would affect around 17,000 workers. They’re employed across its three steel plants in Port Talbot, South Wales,

Port Talbot steel works

Scunthorpe in the north east of England, and Rotherham in South Yorkshire and smaller subsidiary sites.

Unions have also said that bosses are “hell bent” on forcing through the attacks, and are refusing to cooperate with the unions.

This would be the first national industrial dispute in more than 30 years.

HOME CARE

Care jobs threat in Glasgow

LABOUR-RUN Glasgow City Council wants to axe 350 home carers. It plans to force 1,600 workers onto new shift patterns, which would break working regulations.

Cordia, a council arms length company, hopes to shed jobs through voluntary redundancy. It wants to introduce ten new shift patterns.

Half of them would involve opting out of working time rules as the rest time between working days is less than 11 hours.

The Unison union, which represents some of the home carers, argued that “the council should be investing in social

care jobs not cutting them”. Many of the other workers are members of the GMB union.

Unison added that the proposals would also “undermine workers’ health and safety, work life balance and personal caring responsibilities”.

Cordia says the changes are necessary due to “budget pressures” and denies they break the rules.

But the union said it has written confirmation from the company that workers would need to opt out of the European Union Working Time Directive to work five of the ten shift patterns.

CLEANERS

Fight to get Clara Osagiede her job back

THE RMT union is set to ballot all of its members working for outsourcer Interserve on London Underground in defence of sacked cleaners’ rep Clara Osagiede.

Last year Clara represented a group of ten black cleaners at Waterloo station. She took out a grievance against a manager

involved in a hearing. The union agreed to drop this if the company did not victimise anyone.

But management took action against Clara and in January this year offered her money to leave employment.

Clara was sacked after the company came up with what

she insists are “inaccurate statements”.

The union says it will also launch a recruitment campaign in the cleaning grades, and a political campaign to reinstate Clara. It is currently considering providing her with financial assistance.

Raymie Kiernan

FAST FOOD RIGHTS

Build day of solidarity

A FAST Food Rights meeting in central Glasgow last Saturday reflected the energy of the workers’ movement in the US.

It brought the experiences of young, low paid, zero-hours contract workers in Britain together with others from around the globe.

In Britain the campaign is led by the bakers’ union, Bfawu. Campaigners will take national action on Wednesday 15 April in conjunction with massive strikes in the US.

The campaign here calls for £10 an hour minimum wage now and no more zero-hours contracts.

The campaign will be building extensively in coming weeks to prepare for the mass action.

Lorna McKinnon
●fastfoodrights.wordpress.com

PALESTINE SOLIDARITY

Almost at a tipping point in support for Palestine

OVER 200 people came to a Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) event, The Tipping Point, in London last Saturday.

It was an action summit that reflected campaigners’ increased confidence.

Omar Barghout, co-founder of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, said, “Israel might be facing its ‘South Africa moment’ soon.”

While everyone was aware of the scale of the task to win freedom for Palestine, there are clear opportunities to increase the campaigning pressure.

One workshop heard of successes in winning boycotts of Sodastream and Veolia, firms that profit from Israeli apartheid.

A focus now is the

campaign against Hewlett Packard, a company that supplies technology to the Israeli army and navy.

Another is the academic and cultural boycott on the campuses. The summit heard from a Soas student about the overwhelming vote for a boycott in a staff and student referendum.

Campaigns are taking place at several other universities.

In several areas PSC is involved in election hustings to ask candidates their views on Palestine.

Charlie Kimber
●We must not fail Palestine, PSC Camden meeting with Frank Dobson MP, Natalie Bennett, Keir Starmer, John Rose. Wed 25 Mar, St Pancras Community Centre, 30 Camden St, London NW1 0LG

SOAS

CLEANERS AT the School of Oriental and African Studies (Soas) in London were set to protest on Thursday of this week against their employer, outsourcing giant ISS.

The Unison union members are in a long-running battle for better conditions for the migrant workers who make up the workforce.

Recently the company announced that new vacancies will not be given to cleaning staff already

employed in Soas. ISS also demands that new staff must be fluent in English.

Most of the Soas cleaners are not fluent in English but have worked there for many years, some for 18 years.

The cleaners argue ISS should provide lessons for workers rather than refuse to hire non-English speakers.

They are also opposing the company’s attempt to hire new staff on worse terms and conditions.

This move violates an agreement reached last year that won improved sick pay, holidays and pensions after a series of solid strikes.

The cleaners, their union and their supporters have pledged to resist the introduction of a two-tier workforce.

●Justice For Cleaners Protest, No Two-Tier Workforce—No Intimidation, Thu 19 Mar, 12 noon, Thornhaugh St, London WC1H 0XG

RESIST TORY LIES OVER BENEFITS

by LIZ KITCHING, Leeds Unite
Community union chair

I'M WAITING for a letter, and it's terrifying.

Like thousands of other people hit by the bedroom tax and other benefit cuts, I rely on a discretionary housing payment (DHP) from the council.

But these are all up for renewal in April—and the government has slashed the total amount by £40 million.

Some councils will be paying less than half as much. We've heard nothing from Leeds council, but the letters will go out this month.

This is the same council that has just passed yet another austerity budget, slashing services.

Stress

Many of us already have a fight on our hands against ill health, and this only brings more stress and worry.

We've already seen people having their DHP removed when their benefits are stopped, or "sanctioned".

We're set to protest against sanctions on Thursday of this



ACTIVISTS JOINED protests against government contractor Maximus at the start of this month

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

week, as part of a national day of action called by the Unite Community union and the National Benefit Justice Federation.

We're expecting a big and lively protest at Briggate Job Centre in Leeds and hope PCS union members there

will join us. I'll be there as a campaigner, and as the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate for Central Leeds in the general election.

The local campaign Hands Off Our Homes has put together some really good

display boards about what's going on. We're reminding the public about the cruel effects of the bedroom tax and benefit sanctions.

We want to scrap the work capability assessments that test whether sick and disabled claimants of Employment

Support Allowance are "fit for work".

They were wrong when Atos did them. And they're wrong now they're being restarted by Maximus—a firm already mired in controversy over its handling of welfare contracts in Australia.

We're also raising awareness for the anti-racist protests this Saturday.

Migrants' rights are affected whenever they try to claim benefits—from language difficulties to calls for discrimination.

And we can see clearly on the streets that there's a growing number of homeless people—that's unacceptable in one of world's wealthiest countries.

Lie

Sanctions leave people with no money. And the whole system is getting mixed up by Tory Iain Duncan Smith's big lie that is Universal Credit.

It means every household gets one payment that doesn't take account of circumstances.

If they care for a disabled child or if they are victims of domestic violence, they won't get what they're entitled to without getting extra forms and filling them in.

People don't know what to do—and not a single Labour councillor in Leeds has lifted a finger to help them.

They come to us instead.

Join an event near you on the day of action bit.ly/17K4yIV

KEEP OUR NHS PUBLIC

Even if Labour wins general election we must keep up the fight for our NHS

by TOMÁŠ TENGYEVANS

THE LABOUR Party is fighting to make the NHS its key issue for the general election. But this argument isn't just raging between the Tories and Labour.

Health campaigners are continuing to fight for the health service and debating the best strategy to beat back the attacks.

This was evident at a 500-strong Defend London's NHS rally in Hammersmith, west London, on Tuesday of last week.

Different speakers were united on the need to



Health workers on strike in London last year

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

kick the Tories out, with rapturous applause for anyone who bashed health secretary Jeremy Hunt.

Labour MP Andy Slaughter said, "Hunt isn't just a PR man or a snake oil salesman—it's his job to privatise our NHS. But Hunt won't get away with it, because you're here."

But what that means is up for grabs. For Andy Slaughter it's a Labour government with Ed Miliband in Number 10.

"It's Labour that will save the NHS from this rotten Tory/Liberal government," he claimed.

Labour has pledged to repeal the hated Health and Social Care Act, which

brought in the latest raft of privatisation, but it's still committed to Tory cuts and privatisation.

It was clear that many people want to go further than what Labour is offering.

East London GP and Save Our Surgeries campaigner Jackie Turner said, "It was Labour health secretary Alan Milburn who was one of the biggest architects of privatisation."

Jackie won applause arguing for the unions to fight. "We had two vibrant stoppages last year—it wasn't just about pay. But now we have to push the health unions to stand up for the NHS," she said.

Joss Bell from the Socialist Health Association uncritically praised Burnham's ten-year plan, claiming "the NHS just can't survive another top down reorganisation".

In reality, it's an alibi for being silent on Labour.

Candy Udwin, the London chair of Keep Our NHS Public, said, "We need to get the Tories out—we're all united on that."

"But we need to fight for it, not just vote for it."

Slaughter said that if Labour wins the election "we'll be in the same position as we were in 1997". He's right—we'll have to keep up the fight.